Between the Devil and The Deep Blue Sea

by chaos_is_welcome

Summary

Lucifer is gone, and Chloe is left treading water, refusing to move ahead, refusing to look back. An old case comes back to haunt Chloe and changes everything.

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The passage of time can be the strangest thing. Sometimes, Chloe Decker would wait for her partner to crack the predictable, inappropriate joke, eyeroll at the ready. Sometimes she would pick up the phone to call him when she caught a new case. Sometimes she found herself sitting in the parking lot of Lux, ready to go ask him where the hell he has been and if he is ready to get back to work. No matter what, though, she eventually remembers. She remembers that Lucifer left to save them all. He returned to a place he had adamantly fought returning to, a place he abhorred. She remembers his face when he realized her betrayal.

Notes

This work is inspired by and dedicated to Tarysande and Matchstick_dolly. They've both written some amazing multi-chapter fics for this fandom that I have just LOVED and that
have gotten the creative juices flowing. Thank you for all that you two do. This is my first fic for this fandom and my first fic in a very, very long time.

This fic will include a kidnapping and a near-death experience for an adult character, including near-fatal injuries. This will occur in the next chapter, so just be forwarned. Un-beta'd, so all mistakes are mine.
The passage of time can be the strangest thing. Sometimes, Chloe Decker would wait for her partner to crack the predictable, inappropriate joke, eyeroll at the ready. Sometimes she would pick up the phone to call him when she caught a new case. Sometimes she found herself sitting in the parking lot of Lux, ready to go ask him where the hell he has been and if he is ready to get back to work. No matter what, though, she eventually remembers. She remembers that Lucifer left to save them all. He returned to a place he had adamantly fought returning to, a place he abhorred. She remembers that for a short, misguided time, she tried to send him back to that place. She remembers his face when he realized her betrayal.

Sometimes it feels like no time at all has passed since he left. Sometimes it feels like it has been a lifetime. If she’s honest with herself, Chloe feels as if she is treading water in the deep end of the pool, waiting for some indication of what to do next. She knows that she should swim to where she can touch, or reach for the side of the pool, but something in her simply won’t allow it. It’s impossible and painful to consider why she can’t do the logical thing, but she just keeps treading, just keeps waiting. If she waits, it isn’t real. She completely understands that at some point, she’s going to get tired, and then she will drown. (And even then, she won’t be able to touch, because she’ll end up somewhere he can’t go. No matter how guilty she feels about the way she handled things with Lucifer, he isn’t going to let her through the gates of Hell. It hurts more that he’ll allow her to spend an eternity in a place he can’t follow. What good is Heaven if he isn’t there?) She just keeps treading water, because the alternative is admitting that Lucifer is really gone, and that he isn’t coming back. That she’ll never hear him telling her to follow her instincts, because they are good and she should trust them. She’ll never watch his fingers fly across the keys of his piano, which sits too quiet and covered in the penthouse. Worst of all, she’ll never be able to look him in the eyes and explain why she ran to Rome, why she was so willing to work with Father Kinley, and how she sees things differently now. Because what has she had to do, for the past 64 days, but think about what has happened, and how things could have been different.

She goes through the motions of having a life. She spends as much time with Trixie as she can since it’s summer break, spending time at the beach or watching movies. Maze helps, and she can’t bring herself to say more than a few thank-yous, because she’s not ready to talk to Maze about any of it. Instead, she talks with Trixie about the upcoming school year. Middle school is looming over Trixie, something new and unknown, right around the corner. Trixie doesn’t ask about Lucifer, and Chloe pretends not to notice the way her daughter just watches her sometimes, a look that is equal parts concern and puzzlement. Chloe goes to work and tries to look at every crime scene with fresh eyes, tries not to miss the one who is absent. She smiles at Ella’s jokes as they discuss the evidence, knowing the smile doesn’t reach her eyes. Ella will ask, once a week or so, if she’s heard from Lucifer. She still asks Chloe if she’s okay, but it’s already coming less and less. They both know she isn’t, and neither is ready to tackle that particular can of worms. Chloe pretends she can’t see Dan’s slow descent into darkness. He’s drinking more and she often sees him staring into space with his brows furrowed, pain clear in his eyes. She knows she should want to help, that she should ask him what is wrong – if not for herself or for him, then for Trixie—but she just can’t. Because after all, isn’t it terribly useless to try to help another person who is drowning when you know you are destined for the same fate? He lost someone, but so did she. He’s still trying to fill the Charlotte-shaped hole in his life, but her murderer is gone. He has closure, even if he’s not ready to accept it. The whole in Chloe’s life is taller, has wings, and left to keep them all safe.

Goodbye.

She keeps treading water, because swimming to where she can touch means it’s really the end.
Trixie dresses as the devil for Halloween. In all black, with a devil tail and antlers, with a pitchfork. Chloe smiles and hugs her and takes pictures of her in her costume, but she also bites her lip, hard, to keep from telling her daughter she’s missing wings. Maze takes her trick-or-treating, and Chloe is thankful for the tradition and the respite. Chloe marvels at the intricacies of Maze’s makeup, which makes half of her face look sunken, with tendons and teeth exposed. It’s only after Maze leaves with Trixie that it occurs to Chloe it most likely isn’t make-up. Just as Lucifer had another form, it is likely that face is a part of who Maze is. Mazikeen of the Lillim (not Smith), demon brought to earth by the Devil himself. Chloe’s mind reels from the impossibility of it all. She grabs her keys and leaves, needing space and something she can’t name. She finds herself on the balcony of Lux, drinking Lucifer’s bourbon. She toys with the bottle of Blanton’s, tracing the lines of the ornate horse on the cork. She closes her eyes and listens as the city fade to dusk, the warm and humid air clinging to her like a second skin. Since she is in his space, she allows herself to remember. She thinks about the time that she faced Maze down at a winery, when they suspected she was involved in a murder.

You’re the reason he won’t take me back, Maze had snarled at Chloe. What does it say about her skills as a detective that only now, years after Maze spoke those words to her, she finally understands what they meant? Or that it has taken her this long to see Maze’s demon face? Or that she still let Maze take Trixie trick-or-treating? Maze had wanted Lucifer to return her to Hell and he had refused, because of Chloe. What the actual hell, Lucifer? How different would things be if they just had a chance to talk about all of these things—all the loaded statements that she had thought for years were metaphors, but weren’t?

Was Maze upset that Lucifer hadn’t taken her with him when he returned? Did she blame Chloe for that, too? Chloe knew, at least, that Maze would do everything in her power to keep Trixie safe. She imagined the Maze also wouldn’t give up guarding Baby Charlie for any return to trip to Hell. It was hard to remember that Maze was a demon when she sat with Linda and the baby, looking downright domestic. Even with all the questions, Chloe wasn’t ready to talk to Maze about anything that mattered. That felt too much like conceding that Lucifer wouldn’t be back, and she wasn’t willing to do that. Not now, maybe not ever.

She wonders what else she has missed. Usually, she tries not to think of him, of their “moments”—it’s far too painful and makes the Lucifer-sized hole in her chest burn painfully. She finds herself thinking of the time, right after she turned Marcus’s proposal down, right before Charlotte’s death, when she stood on this very spot with Lucifer. He had told her that he had realized she worked with him because she wanted to, and that part of the reason he had been behaving as he had been was to avoid the way he felt about her.

She remembered wondering, what way is that, Lucifer? But of course, she hadn’t said the words. She knew though, she knew what he meant.

I was afraid—afrad that you would want me because you’ve only seen certain sides of me.

She fiddled with the horse on the lid of the bourbon, tears filling her eyes at the nearly perfect memory of his face as he said the words.

That if you saw all of me, knew all of me, you would run away. It’s true, the other side of me—it’s bad. It’s monstrous, even. You wanted the truth, you deserve the truth. And right now I can’t show it to you, so I’m just going to have to tell you. Detective—Chloe—I am the Devil.

The tears fell, as she remembered her denial. No you’re not, not to me. (She can’t even think about the way he said her name, her actual name, or the fact that she can count on one hand the number of
times that he’s said it to her. Spoken so carefully, with reverence, like a prayer.) She had denied it, and then she had kissed him. Then Charlotte had died and everything blew up with Marcus, and then she had seen his other side.

He was the Devil. There was no denying it as she looked on his scorched face.

He’d been afraid she would run away, and she literally had. He had laid his heart to bear for her, told her how he felt, and she had run for the hills. Worse, she had come back and plotted against him.

How foolish she had been. She thinks of the time she wasted, the mistakes she made, all of the things that are left unsaid.

*That if you saw all of me, knew all of me, you would run away.* Luminous brown eyes, full of emotion, full of want, with an edge of fear, open and honest.

She removes the cork with the horse and drinks straight from the bottle, relishing the burn.

It’s been 141 days. She knows she’s drowning and she thinks she deserves it.

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Christmas comes, and the welcome break for Trixie from school. Chloe’s mother comes for a visit, sweeping in with typical Penelope Decker flourish. Chloe keeps herself busy with work, in an effort to avoid her mother and the questions that are bound to come. Answering small talk seems all too human, and Chloe isn’t feeling very human at all these days. She avoids Maze except to hand off Trixie. Linda has stopped calling. She doesn’t ever go to see her, or Charlie or Amenadiel. She tries to avoid Dan, who is more of a ghost of himself than ever, but she needs to nail down the specifics of Christmas for Trixie’s sake. She sees Ella watching him with worried eyes, and berates herself for not checking in on him sooner.

“Hey, Dan,” she says, walking up to his desk under the stairs. (He hasn’t moved it, even though Lucifer is gone, and has been for 194 days—but who’s counting?) “I know things have been weird lately, but I wanted to see if you wanted to come over on Christmas Day. My mom’s in town, so we’ll do dinner and everything, and I know Trixie would love to have you there. That way we can both be with her all day.”

Dan looks at her as if he’s just woken from a long nap, brow furrowed and head nodding.

“Christmas, yeah.” He takes a deep breath, then searches her face for—she has no idea what he’s looking for or at. “Yeah, that would be nice.”

They talk about specifics and what to bring, and she wonders if Dan has the same dichotomy in his life that she does—the version of herself that she gives Trixie, a front to keep things as normal as she can for her daughter; and then the version of herself that she actually is, that barely makes it from day to day. That version of herself plays at surviving, at living a normal life, and doesn’t do a good job of it. Not for the first time, Chloe considers how unhealthy it must be for her daughter that both of her parents are stuck in the past, unable or unwilling to move forward. The most put-together person Trixie sees on a daily basis is her demon-babysitter. Chloe wonders if she really needs to get a handle on things, for Trixie if nothing else. It has, after all, been over six months since Lucifer said his goodbyes on the balcony. *Maybe he really isn’t coming back,* she thinks, and then immediately quashes the thought when the pain in her chest flairs and burns and nearly brings tears to her eyes right there in middle of the precinct, as she moves back to her desk.

Two days later, Dan arrives early on Christmas morning to make them waffles. He stands there in
her kitchen in an apron, blue eyes twinkling as he serves Trixie and her mom their breakfast. Chloe
is struck by how wrong it seems, because there is only one man that’s cooked breakfast in her
kitchen before, and it isn’t Dan. Lucifer helped her find this apartment and has cooked breakfast for
her and occasionally Trixie more times than she can count, and sometimes dinner too. While Marcus
cooked for her at his place, and they slept together here, (she still can’t think about that without
getting angry at herself, angry at Maze, angry at Lucifer, and feeling the need for a long shower and
a longer drink) he never cooked for her here.

Chloe tries to set all the thoughts of the Devil and the world’s first murderer aside, taking a deep
breath at the top of the stairs and steeling herself to play at normal. (For Trixie). She smiles and calls
out, “Merry Christmas!” as she descends the rest of the stairs.

After breakfast, they open presents around the Christmas tree in the living room. Chloe’s mother has
gifted her with a beautifully soft cardigan that will outshine anything currently existing in her closet.
It’s so soft, a luminous shade of teal that Chloe knows will complement her steel grey eyes. Chloe
watches as Trixie opens a gift from her dad and is struck by how much her daughter has changed
recently. The gifts she opens are no longer dolls and toys, but music and STEM kits and chapter
books. In a few short months, Trixie will be twelve. Her childish cheeks and voice are gone, and
she is starting to develop the soft curves of a young lady. She is nearly to Chloe’s shoulders now,
and it’s very difficult to rectify the girl she sees before her with the tiny baby she held in her arms.
She knows the world will continue to move on, whether or not Chloe herself is willing to. That
knowledge doesn’t really change anything, though.

Several hours later, nearly all the presents have been opened. As Dan and her mother move to the
kitchen to work on dinner, Chloe cleans the mountains of wrapping paper from the living room
floor. Trixie comes to stand in front of her, a small box wrapped in silver in her hands. “What do
you have there, Monkey?” she asks.

Trixie bites her lip and fiddles with the present. “I don’t want to make you sad, Mommy, because I
know every time anyone talks about him it makes you sad.” Chloe feels her heart stop. She sits on
the sofa, Trixie following her. It hurts to breath. “This is for Lucifer. I was hoping you can send it
to him, wherever he is? And if not, I can save it for him, for when he comes back.”

Chloe doesn’t know what to say, so she hugs her daughter. “Oh, Monkey. I’m sorry.” She doesn’t
even know what she’s apologizing for. Is she apologizing for the fact that she’s only half-present in
her daughter’s life? Or for the fact that she doesn’t even know what to say? Lucifer has gone
somewhere that the mail doesn’t deliver, and she can’t exactly tell Trixie that. Worse, as much as she
wants to tell Trixie to keep the box, that Lucifer will be back, she isn’t certain he will be.

I don’t lie to you. And she doesn’t want to lie to Trixie, either.

Goodbye.

In the end, she takes the box, and tells Trixie she’ll hold on to it for her. She hugs her daughter one
more time, then takes the box upstairs. There, she allows herself a good cry. She wonders who has
ever given the Devil a Christmas present. What trinket did her daughter find that reminded her of the
one who is missing, after all the time that has passed? How many times has Trixie wanted to talk
about Lucifer, and stopped herself, for fear of making her mother sad? Chloe has to stop this line of
thought in its tracks, before she spirals into an abyss that she will not be able to pull herself from.
There are people downstairs who expect her to return whole and responsive.

Most of the rest of the afternoon is peaceful. Chloe enjoys spending time with an entirely human
group of friends. It’s actually the first time in a long while she’s had a group of people in her house
that didn’t include an angel, a demon, or the Devil. They eat an extravagant early dinner, until
everyone is too full. She and her mother sip wine after dinner and joke about Chloe’s childhood. They tell Trixie and Dan stories about Chloe’s dad, and Chloe loves that they are able to keep his memory alive and share him with Trixie. But as the afternoon gives way to evening, Chloe notices Dan is starting to get that far off look in his eyes again. He’s thinking of Charlotte. Like Chloe, playing at normal takes it’s toll on him, and eventually the façade slips. Soon he is saying his goodbyes to Penelope and to Trixie, hugging her tight and making plans for her to come over for the weekend, for an extended stay that will bring in the New Year. Dan is a lot of things, but he does a good job setting them all aside on the days he has his daughter.

Chloe walks him to the door and is taken by surprise when Dan pulls her outside, pulling the door shut behind them.

“Is he coming back?” He says forcefully, anger and something unspeakable suddenly shining in his eyes. He doesn’t say who he’s talking about, and he doesn’t need to.

_Oh._ Chloe exhales softly. He must have overheard her exchange with Trixie. “I—I don’t really know, Dan.” She doesn’t understand, after all this time, how he can still be so angry with Lucifer over something that really, truly wasn’t his fault. She feels the burning inside again as she speaks her fears. “I really don’t think so. The reason he left, it was important and . . . he may not be able to come back.”

Even though she knows Dan blames Lucifer, she’s taken totally by surprise by what he says next. “Good. I hope he doesn’t. I hope he never comes back.” Bitterness laces his voice.

It hurts. It hurts to hear him say it, because she suddenly understands that while she is aware that Dan is in the deep end, desperately treading water, he still thinks she’s in the shallows. She imagines that in Dan’s mind, she’s standing where she can touch, waving happily at him from a safe place as he tries to keep his head above water. He’s so caught up in his own pain, he doesn’t see hers. He doesn’t realize that she’s right there next to him, trying desperately to keep her own head above water. He doesn’t see that she’s losing the battle, that it’s not a matter of if she will drown, but when. Then again, this has always been the way with him. She remembers the time he took her to Malcolm’s hospital room after the Palmetto shooting, trying to convince her that Malcolm wasn’t the crooked cop, that it was all in her head. He did that, knowing that he was the one that had shot Malcolm. Thinking about that makes her think of Lucifer’s steadfast support on that matter, and so many others. _Really, Detective_, she hears his all to smooth voice say, _why ever are you surprised?_

“I’m—I’m sorry you feel that way Dan. Please, take care of yourself. For Trixie.” What else can she say? She turns and goes back inside before he can say anything else, before she changes her mind and yells and screams like she wants to. It isn’t fair. Nothing about any of this is fair.

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It’s Trixie’s twelfth birthday. The weather is beautiful, typical Los Angeles in February. The air is crisp and cool by LA standards, in the mid-sixties with a beautiful breeze. Chloe has acquired a pavilion on the beach, and works to set up all the trappings of a full-blown party while Trixie frolics in the waves. The sun shines, not too hot but brilliant. Linda, Amenadiel and Charlie arrive first, along with Maze. Chloe has worked ridiculously hard to speak with them as little as possible since Lucifer has left, but at this point, she is lonely and tired.

“Hey, Decker!” Maze hails, slapping her on the ass as she runs by on her way to play in the water with Trixie. Chloe huffs a chuckle, taking in Maze’s ridiculous swimsuit, which is really just a bunch of straps artfully put together to cover up the important bits. She should be worried about the
influence such wardrobe choices may have on her daughter, but Chloe supposes that Maze’s ridiculousness in that department balances out Chloe’s own “granny-panties” choices, as Maze calls them.

“You never return my calls,” Linda says, coming up along side her. She is carrying Charlie, who is wiggling in her arms making cooing sounds that sound a whole lot like “down.” Amenadiel, God’s favorite son, is currently setting up a pack and play under the shade of the pavilion for Charlie.

Chloe stops what she is doing and hugs Linda. She hadn’t realized how much she misses her friend. She’s been so busy trying not to feel anything that she has forgotten what it’s like to be with people who know her, who know Lucifer, who understand. Linda hugs her back, hard, as much as the squirming baby in her arms will allow. “I know, I’m sorry,” Chloe says. “It’s been . . . difficult.”

Linda nods, watching Amenadiel struggle with assembling the pack and play. “I can’t imagine what you’ve been going through Chloe. But you didn’t need to go through it alone.” Chloe remembers that Linda and Amenadiel have lost Lucifer too, that they love (loved?) him too. It doesn’t make it better though, or make it hurt less.

Just as it always has, Chloe feels like talking about it—about him—makes everything real. If she talks about him in the past tense, then he isn’t coming back. He’s really gone. She looks out to where the ocean meets the sand, focusing on Trixie as she runs carefree in the waves. Trixie is the anchor that keeps her from being lost on the sea of despair. As she watches Trixie, she is able to admit to herself why she has avoided her friends. Linda is a doctor to her core. Chloe knows Linda wants to help her deal with her trauma, but she isn’t ready. Acceptance is the first step towards recovery, blah blah blah. Chloe doesn’t want to accept, she doesn’t want to recover, and she sure as hell doesn’t want to move on. She can’t go forward, she can’t go back, so she’ll just . . . wait.

As Chloe puts the finishing touches on the decorations for the pavilion, she finds herself remembering the time immediately after. The night Lucifer left for Hell, she had found her way to Linda and Amenadiel’s home. She had to tell someone what had happened. They had held her while she cried. They had talked through ways to get out of this mess, and they had come up with nothing. For the first few weeks, she had talked to them regularly, hoping for a solution that would allow them to bring Lucifer back from Hell. When no solution made itself known, she stopped returning calls, stopped asking Amenadiel if he had any thoughts on what to do next. She had walled herself off from them, because talking to them reminded her that there was no way out of this nightmare. If Lucifer’s angel brother couldn’t think of a way to get Lucifer back from Hell, what could she, a mere mortal, do?

Amenadiel finished with the pack and play and opened his arms for Charlie. Linda brings him the baby, smiling at both of them as she passes the wiggling child off. Chloe watches as Amenadiel presses a kiss to Linda’s forehead as he takes the baby, watches as he lifts his son up into the air and nibbles on his toes. Charlie laughs and Chloe can’t breathe as she watches the angel set his son gently in the pack and play, handing him some toys to play with. Charlie immediately rolls over and sits up, banging a toy on the floor of the pack and play. Chloe finds her mouth lifting at the display, even as her chest is absolutely burning with things she can’t name. While she doesn’t begrudge them what they have, it doesn’t seem fair that Amenadiel and Linda can have such ridiculous happiness while Lucifer is in Hell. It hurts too much to see them happy. If she’s honest with herself, it reminds her of what could have been (but will never be, the voice that’s getting harder to ignore whispers).

Past tense. This is why she doesn’t return Linda’s calls, why she doesn’t drop by their house anymore.

She realizes Linda is watching her with worry in her eyes. Ella arrives with Dan then, and saves her
from being psychoanalyzed. *Saved by the Douche*, she hears, artfully delivered. The pain burns hotter, so she busies herself with laying out the silverware.

The party is a huge success. Trixie’s friends from school come. Everyone smiles and laughs and Trixie glows as they sing happy birthday to her. Chocolate cake is consumed by all. They play in the waves, and then later have a bonfire as the sun sets off the California coast. It is a perfect day, or as perfect as a day can be in this new facsimile of normal.

Trixie falls asleep in the car on the way home, her skin sun-kissed and a smile on her face. Chloe carries her daughter to bed, which is no small feat since she’s only got about thirty pounds on her at this point. She climbs the stairs to her room and starts the shower. She thinks about the way Amenadiel kisses Linda’s forehead, the way that he watches her, and watches Charlie. She steps into the shower and allows the tears to come. The Lucifer-shaped hole in her chest burns and flames and she is positive it will consume her.

Its been 240 days. With the warm water beating down on her, remembering the feeling of the sun on her skin and the joy of Trixie’s laughter as she runs in the waves, Chloe can finally be honest with herself. He isn’t coming home. He won’t ever come back, because he believes (and in her heart, she knows that he is right) that by staying in Hell, he is protecting them all. Amenadiel can look at Linda and Charlie like that because they don’t have to live under the constant fear that demons will come and destroy their happiness. She can watch her daughter play in the surf without a care in the world because she doesn’t have to worry that the darkness will reach out and touch her any second of the day. Lucifer will stay in Hell so that the rest of them can go on with their lives. He doesn’t realize that her life can’t be whole without him, and that is what makes it so wrong. He’s gone and she knows he believes she will simply move on. He doesn’t understand that just as Linda and Charlie are Amenadiel’s sun, he has a place next to Trixie as hers. Yes, she was able to tell him she loved him, but she’s positive he doesn’t understand the depth of her feelings. She can’t move on. She can’t go forward, she can’t go back. She’ll never be whole again. She sits in the shower and cries as the hole in her fractures and breaks.
Undertow

Chapter Summary

Everything changes on day 332.

This chapter involves a kidnapping and graphic violence (not that graphic, really, but better safe than sorry!)

Everything changes on day 332.

Chloe is working a new case, a double homicide at a bodega in Los Feliz. The victims are a husband and wife who own the bodega. The husband was behind the counter, the wife in the front cleaning the windows. Both were shot dead with a medium caliber gun from the door of the store. Dan is interviewing witnesses while Chloe and Ella discuss the victims.

“Juan and Camilla Flores,” Ella says. “Immigrated from Mexico 20 years ago, have owned this bodega ever since. COD is a double tap to the chest for Camilla, bullet to the head for Juan. RIP, buddies. It looks like the perp didn’t even come into the store, he just opened the door and whammo.”

Chloe nods. “Anything stolen?”

Ella shakes her head. “Register is full o’ cash.”

“Security cameras?”

“A big nope. Might want to have Dan check the other stores in the area.”

Chloe nods and thanks Ella, then waits for Dan to finish with his witness. She tasks him with checking the neighboring stores for security cameras. Dan quickly summarizes the witness statements and basically lets her know they have nothing. She thanks him too, then climbs in her car to head back to the station. Checking her phone, she sees a message from the lieutenant, requesting her to come see her when she gets back to the station.

Lieutenant Ochoa has been the LT since the whole Pierce-Sinnerman fiasco. Chloe respects him and he’s always been fair. He rarely summons her to his office, so she wonders what’s going on. She makes the long, arduous drive back to the station through LA’s afternoon traffic. She calls Maze on the way, asking her to make sure that Trixie does her homework. With any luck, she’ll be home by 7 tonight, which will allow her read with Trixie before bedtime. Chloe knows that as they barrel toward the teenage years, its only a matter of time until Trix won’t want her to curl up in bed and read with her anymore. She’ll take what she can while she can get it.

Almost an hour later, she is taking a seat in Ochoa’s office.

“Decker, thanks for coming by,” Ochoa greats. He’s tall and in his early 40s. His dark complexion and black hair reflect his El Salvadorian roots. Chloe knows that Ochoa’s family came to the United States when he was five. His brother was pulled away from the family by drugs and had been killed when the LT was 15. Becoming a cop was Ochoa’s way of coping, and he was a damn good one. Chloe respected him a great deal.
“No problem, sir. What’s up?” She isn’t worried, but she’d just as soon get this over with. The sooner they’re done, the sooner she can finish up and go home. Ochoa sits behind his desk, stretching out as if it’s been a long day.

“A couple things. First of all, I wanted to talk to you about partnering up with another detective, since Mr. Morningstar does not appear to be returning to assist you.”

*Nope,* Chloe thinks, *this is not happening.* “With all due respect, sir, I worked alone before Lucifer started consulting, and I’ve worked alone since he left.” Accepting a new partner would feel like a betrayal to Lucifer. She knows no matter how good they are, they won’t be him, and it simply isn’t something she’s willing to entertain.

“Decker, there’s a reason we work in pairs. It’s safer that way and it gives us a second set of eyes.”

“Detective Espinoza and Ms. Lopez are my go-tos for those things, sir. We keep an eye on each other.” Chloe starts fiddling with the zipper on her jacket. This is not something she wants to be discussing.

Ochoa purses his lips. “Maybe partnering with Espinoza, perhaps? That would really kill two birds with one stone. You’d have backup and maybe that would help with the solve rate, too.”

Now Chloe is confused. “Sir?” Her solve rate with Lucifer had been excellent. Since his departure, not so much, but she didn’t think it was so low as to be an issue.

“Since Espinoza’s re-promotion after the Mayan case, his solve rate has been pretty low. Yours isn’t as good as it was when you were working with Mr. Morningstar. Perhaps it would be good for both of you.

Chloe thinks about Dan’s vehement declaration that Lucifer is gone. She thinks about him standing with her outside Malcolm’s hospital room, and acting like she was the one who had it wrong. Like he hadn’t been complicit in the whole thing. “Sir, Detective Espinoza is my ex-husband. We share custody of our daughter. It’d be a personal nightmare, plus if something happened to both of us, say a freak car accident on the way to a crime scene—my daughter, she’d have no one, sir.”

Ochoa lets out a sigh. “That’s fair enough, I suppose. I still don’t like you out there by yourself. Think about it, okay?”

“Yes, sir,” Chloe said, without hesitation. It was easy enough to agree to think about it. It didn’t mean she’d have to agree. “You said there was something else?”

“Oh yeah, I wanted to let you know Jacob Tierning’s case is heading to trial. I know it’s one of the last collars Mr. Morningstar helped with. I also know your daughter was very nearly injured on a hit attempt on Mr. Morningstar that was orchestrated by Tierning. I thought you might like to know.”

*I’d do anything for that little urchin.* Lucifer, leaning on his balcony with a glass of whiskey. Tierning’s men had busted into the penthouse, guns drawn and ready to kill Lucifer. She’d seen the holes in his shirt the proved they had certainly tried. Trixie had been in the same room when it happened, thankfully pulled into a closet by Eve. (Yes, the first woman, because who else would the Devil date after Chloe conspired to send him to hell?) A lifetime ago, and a reminder of the time she’d wasted. “Thank you, sir.”

Ochoa shifted. “It’s very likely those involved will be called to testify, yourself and Mr. Morningstar included. I don’t suppose you’re in touch with him? HR has tried with no success for several weeks.”
Sorry, sir, no phones in Hell, Chloe thought. She remembered Lucifer’s elation at the inside joke of telling the truth and never having it be taken seriously. “No, sir. Lucifer, he had to take care of some family business. I’m afraid the location is rather . . .” Something must be wrong with her, because she’s struck by the urge to say something ludicrous, like hot. Instead she fumbles, “It’s rather remote, sir. No phones, no mail service.”

“Ah, so Mr. Morningstar has gone back in time, then.” Ochoa says, with a laugh. He means it as a joke, but Chloe acknowledges that it’s a hell of a lot closer to the truth than a remote location.

“Sorry I can’t be of help there, sir. And thanks again for the heads up on Tierning. If there’s nothing else?” Chloe shifts to rise, hopeful of a hasty exit. This conversation had involved Lucifer far too much for her taste. She’d been doing better lately, but she wasn’t so reformed that she could just talk about him in casual conversation and not pay the price.

“That’s all, Decker. Go home, for once. You’ve earned it.” He stands to shake Chloe’s hand, following her out into the bullpen.

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Chloe is stretched out with Trixie on her bed, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix open between them. She and Trixie take turns reading, giggling at each other’s impressions of Dumbledore and Hagrid. This is a tradition they began after Trixie’s 12th birthday party (after the shower, and the breaking of something in Chloe, and the shifting of life of from waiting to accepting, as hard as it was). Even though they’d both read the books and seen the movies, it was wonderful to make a habit of curling up in bed, on the nights they could, and get captured in an epic tale of good and evil, magic, and what is right. (It helped Chloe that the evil wasn’t the Devil.) Chloe had always read to Trixie when she could, but moving on to such complex chapter books seemed another marker of the fact that Trixie was on the path to becoming a young lady. She was close to finishing out her first year of middle school and looking more grown with every passing day.

In a very uncharacteristic move, Chloe had ditched work after talking to Ochoa. She knew that the Flores case would be waiting for her in the morning. After talking of partners and Lucifer’s whereabouts, Chloe wanted nothing more than to curl up with her daughter and not think about what is missing. She knows he’s not coming back—she left any hope of that with the broken pieces of herself in the shower back in February, but it still hurts. She wonders if it’s ever going to stop. It’s been almost a year. How long did it take to get over the Devil? (She already knows the answer, though. She knows it will probably take all of her mortal life, and all of her soul’s eternity. He deserved that much, at least, from her, after everything they’d been through.)

Trixie finishes reading the chapter out loud and yawns. Chloe glances at the clock, shocked to see it’s almost nine. They’d been reading for over two hours. She boops her daughter on her nose. “Glad we did this, Trixie-babe. We were overdue for some quality time.”

Trixie giggles her little girl giggle, a sound that Chloe has heard less and less frequently in the last few years. “We were, mommy.” Chloe hopes against hope that Trixie’s term of endearment will survive into the teenage years. Trixie boops Chloe’s nose right back. “Go to bed. You know you haven’t been sleeping enough.” This year was left unsaid, but Chloe was all too aware of the ever-present dark circles under her eyes.

“Ditto, Monkey,” she said, hugging her daughter close. “Sleep well. Love you.”

“Love you more, mommy.” Trixie reaches over and turns of her light as Chloe leaves the room.

Chloe slides the door all but an inch closed. She fishes out the latest top shelf goods she pilfered
from her most recent trip to the penthouse—a Balvenie Single Malt Scotch that was smooth and smoky. She’d started bringing his liquor home in February, another concession she made to both feel closer to him and acknowledge that he wouldn’t be coming home. She had acquired a taste for the things he had appreciated, and it was so easy to pretend the burning in her chest and in her eyes was from the liquor and not because she still missed him.

Chloe pours a glass and climbs the stairs. She nurses the scotch as she reads a random book Linda had recommended. That’s another thing that’s changed since February. Every Saturday that she is off, she and Trixie drive to Linda and Amenadiel’s house. They have brunch, coo over Charlie, and chat with Maze. After, Linda and Chloe go to Linda’s home office and talk. It isn’t quite a session, but it’s all she’s able to manage at the moment. It helps, a little. She mostly talks about the things she regrets—running instead of staying, Father Kinley, not letting herself see the truth of Lucifer’s words when he tried to tell her the truth. Linda gives her books and puzzles and things to occupy her time at home. Again, it helps a little. Everything still hurts, all the time, but it’s less of a losing-your-shit-in-the-shower, falling-to-pieces hurt, and more of an ever-present ache. She’s able to live more in the present, and she knows that’s better for Trixie. Chloe supposes she’s still treading water, but she comes to the side to hold on when she gets tired. She admits she needs a break, that it hurts, that it’s okay. And then she goes back to treading water, because while she knows Lucifer isn’t coming back, she isn’t ready to do anything else. Even though it’s been months since losing it in that damn shower, that part hasn’t changed. She won’t move on, she won’t be whole. It’s a fact, just like the knowledge that he won’t be back.

Chloe nurses the scotch and reads her book. When the scotch is gone and her eyes are too heavy to keep open, she checks to make sure her phone is on the charger and then goes to brush her teeth. She takes the cup downstairs, checks both doors, and arms the alarm system. It’s 10:45. Chloe climbs the stairs and turns out the light. For once, she falls immediately to sleep.

**

Chloe’s eyes fly open and stare at the alarm clock in the dark. 11:30. Something’s wrong. She doesn’t know what woke her, but there’s a familiar feeling in the pit of her stomach. It’s the one she often gets before things go sideways with a suspect. Then she hears it, the soft click of the front door, the metallic gliding sound that is Trixie’s door being rolled open. Chloe can’t think of a reason those two sounds should happen in that order, even if Trixie is trying to sneak out. That’s something she hasn’t done since the last time she went to Lucifer’s penthouse, anyway. She rolls out of bed, grabs her gun from the nightstand and quickly slides down the stairs. There are two men standing in her living room. One is heavy set, with a crooked nose that’s clearly been broken more than once. He’s taller than the other, and has more hair. They are lit by the soft light from above the stove. “Freeze,” she yells, as she comes down the last few stairs.

Two hands snake out from a blind spot, near Trixie’s door, and grabs her hands over the gun. She’s unprepared and off balance from her perch on the stairs. The man (they are definitely man hands) yanks her gun away from her, throwing her off balance, and then slams the butt of it into her face as she falls. She hears a crunch and knows her nose has been broken as she hits the floor. She watches, sideways, as two of the men go into Trixie’s room again. She hears her daughter scream. “Trixie,” she groans, trying to get to her feet.

“Mommy!” The tall man is carrying Trixie, but she’s struggling for all she’s worth. She wiggles enough to see Chloe, the blood covering her face, and SCREAMS. Good girl, Trix, Chloe thinks as she pulls herself to her feet. She runs at the man holding Trixie, but again is taken by surprise as one of the other men intercepts her. His fist connects with her jaw. She manages to get in a few hits too, but it isn’t enough. She’s on the floor again. Three against one isn’t good odds, and they are all bigger and stronger than she is. She pulls herself up again. Ready to go after them again.
The assailant she hadn’t gotten a good look at before squares off to face her. He’s big and burley, the kind of guy that spends a lot of time at the gym. Chloe meets his eyes, and they are dark and deadly. He raises her gun. “Bitch won’t stay down,” he grumbles. He pulls the trigger, and Chloe hears the explosion of the gun firing. She’s aware that Trixie’s screams are no longer wake-the-neighbor loud, they are now panicked and desperate. She feels the pain rip through her stomach, finds herself inexplicably on the floor again. She looks around the room wildly for Trixie and meets her daughter’s panicked eyes as the man carrying her over his shoulder turns to leave out Chloe’s front door. Trixie kicks and screams in earnest. She takes her elbow, a move she undoubtedly learned from Maze, and smashes it with all her might into the back of tall guy’s head. He drops her and she makes to run for Chloe, but the man with the dead eyes is faster. He takes the butt of gun and hits Trixie in the back of the head. Chloe makes a sound of protest as her daughter, her beautiful daughter that she labored with for 16 hours before having a c-section, falls to the floor, still.

“Trixie!” She calls. “You son of a bitch, I will find you.” She growls at the man with the dead eyes. The big guy is recovered and picks of Trixie’s limp form.

The man with the dead eyes walks back to her. “You’re already dead, bitch. Don’t worry, as long as your sack of shit ex-husband does as he’s told, she’ll be fine. But you’ll be dead.” He kicks Chloe in the face and she nearly blacks out, and then they’re gone. She’s alone.

She remembers laying on the floor of Jimmy’s recording studio. I’m dying, she’d whispered. Lucifer had loomed over her. I won’t let you.

She pushes her hand into the pain in her stomach, raises it and sees the dark blood. Chloe knows she really is dying this time. If this had all happened a year ago, she might have prayed. For Trixie, for her daughter’s safety. Now she knows God exists, but all evidence seems to point to the fact that he doesn’t give a damn—not about his creations or even his own children. But she knows who does give a damn, and if praying works for God, than maybe it will work for the Devil too. Because she’s out of time and Trixie is gone, and she’s in the worst kind of danger.

Lucifer, I need you. Trixie needs you. Help us, please. She keeps repeating herself in her head, struggling to keep the darkness at bay. She isn’t treading water anymore—she knows she’s being pulled under and it’s the end. Please, Lucifer. Trixie.

Somewhere in the kitchen over her shoulder, the clock reads 11:50.
Lucifer hates being back in hell. More than anything, he fears losing the pieces of himself that he’s found during his most recent “vacation” on Earth. He fears becoming that thing he was for a short time, with the red, burned skin of his fall and the wings of a monster. So as much as it hurts him to think of the things that he associates with home, he has a ritual.

He finds it odd that in all the eons he has existed, he never had a place he called home until recently. Heaven, for all the glory that God and his siblings pontificated, was as much of a hell to him as the place he currently presided over. In Heaven, he was expected to blindly follow, to never consider for himself, to never question or act without a divine directive. In Hell, at least, he could do as he pleased, within the confines of hell. Of course, the nature of Hell itself precluded so many of the things he generally found pleasing—music, good liquor, food, rest . . . the company of the Detective. It wasn’t until the last five years they he felt he had a home, a place that he belonged—at least for a short time.

The thing about having a divine memory is that while he can remember every detail of a story, every curve of every face he’s ever encountered, every letter or word, Lucifer can never quite muster the exact memory of his other senses. He can’t remember the exact burn of fine whiskey, or the beautiful sounds he is able to pull from the piano. He can’t quite remember the sweet twinkle of Beatrice’s laughter, or the taste of the Detective when she kissed him. But he knows those things make him who he is, so he thinks of them often, trying to reconstruct every sensory memory he can.

He never intends to leave—the stakes are too great. That makes it all the harder to think of what had become home. What is lost, what can never be. Yet he finds solace in knowing that whilst he will spend the rest of time here, life will go on for those he loves. Beatrice will laugh and love and become an incredible something someday—probably a detective, like her mother and father. Charlie
would grow and become strong, belonging to both Heaven and Earth. Linda and Amenadiel could love their son, and each other, without fear of demons returning. He wondered if his brothers and sisters would return to attempt to take Charlie again, but he knows that fight must be Amenadiel’s. He has Maze to help him—she wouldn’t let anything happen to that little urchin. Or Chloe’s urchin, either. He hoped Maze had forgiven him for leaving her behind. Even if she still wished to return to hell, he felt much better leaving her behind to protect all those he loved.

My, and what a list he had. The doctor, his brother, their child, Ms. Lopez, Beatrice, and of course the Detective. Chloe. Of all the things that hurt, thinking of her hurt the most. He’s been here a long time now—it feels like he’s been in hell for centuries. He knows, hopes, that Chloe has moved on, because she deserves to be happy. He’s known since the beginning that it was wrong of him to want her for himself, because there is no version of this story that results in him giving her what she deserves. But he wants. Never in his long, storied history has the Devil wanted something that was willfully given and denied himself. (Of course, he wanted his father’s love and acceptance, but here the willfully given condition was not met. That was something far beyond his control.) So after he’s done something categorically abhorrent to keep Hell running smoothly, he sits on his throne and brings up a memory of home to remind himself that he isn’t a monster, and the job that he’s doing is not all that he is. (Linda would be proud). On the worst days, when he feels sick and chilled from what he has had to do, he summons the memory of Chloe’s face. He thinks about one of the thousands of memories he has filed away under the tab home, and he works to reconstruct the smells and sounds and tastes that go along with her. It hurts like hell, but it also reminds him that he isn’t a monster. If the Devil can want something as much as he wants her, and choose instead what is right over what he wants, then he knows he isn’t a monster. Remembering her reminds him of this, and also that this is the good thing to do. If he doubts that, he pulls the memory from the Mayan of her reaching for him as the demons pulled her away. That is what happens when humans and demons interact. He cannot, will not, allow that.

So he does what he has to, and then he flies to his throne and brings up the memories that remind him of the man he was, who he still wants to be. That is how he has survived the undeterminable amount of time he has been in hell.

He’s just done one of those things that makes him feel like he may lose himself—tearing apart a demon who dared to speak against him, and has just settled onto his throne when he hears her.

Lucifer. He’s already taken flight, because there is pain, real pain in her voice in his head. He feels the effort it takes for her to say his name, the long, wet gathering of energy for her next words. She’s never sounded like that, not even when Jimmy shot her. I need you. Trixie needs you. Help us, please. Each word, each phrase, comes with a pause, a gasp as she gathers energy for the next. A mortal wound, then, he thinks as he flies through the gates of Hell. She is not long for her world—he knows it in his core and it terrifies him. He can hear the seconds ticking by, knowing he might be too late. Categorically refusing that as a non-option, he flies faster. He cannot be too late. He prays to his father, who he knows does not listen to him. This is Chloe, and she’s always been the one exception to his moratorium on asking anything at all from his father. Please, Father, let me reach her in time. He crosses into the Earthly plain, and simply thinks of where he needs to go.

The Detective’s voice comes again, soft and weak. Please, Lucifer. Trixie. Bloody hell, he knows she’s giving up. Not today. Not ever, if he has anything to say about it. He’s in Los Angeles now. He thinks more specifically. Her apartment, her door, her home. He knows that’s where she is. Prayers are interesting communication devices, almost like location enabled cell phone calls. As he hears her words, there’s a ping in his divine mental map, telling her exactly where she is. Quite useful in a pinch, really.
He sees her apartment complex and pushes his wings harder. Her door is open, so he rockets through it.

He roars when he sees her. She’s on the floor, and bullocks, she is covered in blood. Her face is battered and bruised, with blood pouring from her nose, but it’s the wound in her stomach that will be fatal. He tamps down the panic that rises in him at the sight of her blood, at how frail and pale she looks. There is no time to waste; he must act, not feel. He recognizes a gut shot from his all-too frequent brushes with mortality in the Detective’s presence. He collects her in one arm and reaches with the other to pull a feather from his still-present wings.

“Detective, I’m here.” He gives her a slight shake with the arm under her, takes the feather and places it over the gunshot wound. She doesn’t respond. She’s too still, too pale. He can feel her pulse, but it’s weak and barely there. “Come on, Chloe,” he pleads, desperate to hear her, “you called, I answered, the least you could do is bloody well wake up.” He’s pressing the feather to the bloody entrance wound on her stomach.

Her head rolls. “I didn’t think they’d let you into heaven.” When she speaks the words, they’re slurred and muddled, but he understands.

He lifts his now featherless hand to her face, the corner of his mouth lifting in a half smile. “Right, well, I think you’ll have to wait awhile for that, if you don’t mind. I told you once, I won’t let you die.” The feather at her midsection begins to glow. Relief rushes through him because the threat of her imminent death is gone. In an uncharacteristic move, he finds himself thanking Dad for returning his wings. It has undoubtedly saved her life.

He feels her move her face against his hand ever so-slightly. “Can’t stop me.” She slurs. “What’s that?” She tries to lift her head to look at the glow, fails, and then lolls back into the support of his arm.

He tightens his arm around her, moves the hand from her face to her hand and squeezes it. “The hell I can’t. Angel feathers, Detective. Divine healing properties. So no dying today, Devil's orders.” As he speaks, the ethereal glow of the feather becomes nearly blinding, even to his eyes.

“Trixie,” she moans. “Lucifer, they took Trixie.”

He strokes her face. “Shh, lets get you on your feet first, shall we? Shouldn’t be too much longer.” He pats the sides of her pajama pants and frowns. “I don’t suppose your phone is close by.” There are things that needed to be set in motion to facilitate finding her spawn. There is certainly no time to waste.

“Charging upstairs. My room.” she says, sounding clearer than before. As he watches, the huge bruise on her face shrinks, ever so slightly. The bleeding from her nose stops, too—all a by-product of the single feather on her gunshot wound. He could get the phone and be back quickly, but he doesn’t want to let her go. This was close, too damn close for comfort. He realizes he’s kneeling in a disturbingly large pool of her blood. The ash from his pants is mixing with the dark red to make a hideous grey-red paste. His hands are covered too. Bloody hell, too close.

He hears sirens and is glad the decision is taken out of his hands. He simply holds her—something he never imagined he would be able to do again. He takes her hand again, then moves their joined hands over her heart and revels in each beat. It is a balm on his battered soul as the thrum of her heart becomes stronger and more steady with each passing moment. Too close. He tries not to think about her heart being still and silent. Had she not thought to call for him, he would never have even known she’d been hurt until it was too late. He fights against the sound of distress bubbling in him and holds her tighter, focusing on her heartbeat and the feel of her breathing in, breathing out.
By the time the uniformed officers scramble through the door, the feather is gone. The gun shot wound in the Detective’s center mass is nothing but a tiny scratch. She’ll tell the EMT later that she was just grazed by the bullet. It’s fortunate that the wound is still there, to at least partially account for the blood. Normally healing from divine feathers carries a lengthy recovery period, including a deep, extended sleep. But of course the Detective refuses to play by the rules and rolls in his arms as the uniforms arrive, trying to get to her feet. He helps her stand, remembering at the last minute that his wings are still out. Thankfully it is dark and he’s facing the door. He rolls his shoulders and the wings disappear. He’s once again thankful for their usefulness. It’s not the first time the wings have saved her life, and by extension his. His shoes slip on her blood as he helps her stand and his stomach rolls. Too close, too close, too close.

“Freeze!” The uniform in the front yells.

“Detective Chloe Decker, Homicide.” The Detective tries her damndest to say it forcefully, but it comes out soft. She recites her badge number. He tightens his arm around her as she wobbles, and she places her forehead on his chest. “I’ve been shot. My daughter was taken. Three suspects. Get me someone to take a description, get me Detective Dan Espinoza on a phone. I need to talk to Lieutenant Ochoa, too.”

Lucifer quirks a brow at the poor young man in the uniform, who is gawking at the woman, covered in blood, who has just ordered him around when she has told her to freeze. The poor chap looks exceptionally confused, and how can Lucifer blame him? The Detective is a force to be reckoned with on a normal day, and on this particular day she has been assaulted in her own home and her offspring has been taken. The poor young lad doesn’t stand a chance. As the other uniforms clear the apartment, the young man in front of them considers for a moment, then re-holsters his weapon and nods. “Right away, ma’am.” Damn, but it’s good to be home.

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The Detective sends a uniform to fetch her phone. She’s sitting on the couch, ice pack applied to her face and nose. She’s been seen by an EMT but refuses anything that inhibits her ability to share what happened and get things rolling on the search for Beatrice. Her nose is still broken, but not as bad as it was. The bruising is very slight, considering how she looked when Lucifer arrived. They claim some of the blood on the floor must be from a kidnapper. The Detective pleads ignorance when they ask if she hit one of them. She says it’s all a blur. They took her gun, she tells them, and everything happened so fast. She has no problem though, providing a detailed description of each of the three men. She keeps one eye on Lucifer, and whenever he’s close enough, she reaches out to touch him, almost as if she needs the contact to know he’s real. He certainly doesn’t complain, and just maybe he needs it as much as she does. Too close, too close, too close.

She calls Daniel, then her lieutenant. She only asks that they come immediately and that its urgent. She hands him the phone. “Do what you need to,” she says. He calls Maze first, tells her what has happened and what needs to be done. He can hear the rage in her crisp responses when he tells her the offspring was taken. He hasn’t let himself think too much about that. He can’t, lest he lose his focus and be useless to the Detective. If she can remain focused right now, the he certainly can too. He texts Amenadiel. Talk to Maze. Emergency with the Detective. Watch the gate. Will update when I can.

Then Daniel is there and the Detective’s crying as he wraps his arms around her. Bloody hell, when he thought she’d move on, he hadn’t thought it would be in that direction. But he listens to what she’s saying, and it’s not words of love, it’s about Beatrice. “I tried to stop them, but they got the best of me. Oh, Dan, she tried to fight them. She screamed enough to raise the dead, and she even knocked one of them on the head. They knocked her out, Dan.” She sounds desperate and more
than a little lost. “I couldn’t stop them.” Lucifer does not miss the all-too-familiar guilt that laces her words. He makes a mental note to address that as soon as he’s able. Suddenly, the Detective’s eyes widen. Lucifer knows that look—she’s just thought of something important, remembered a new detail. She struggles to get up. Daniel, of course, is too slow in figuring out that she needs help, so Lucifer reaches out, offers her his hand and pulls her to her feet. She wobbles, so he steps closer to offer her a supporting arm.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” Daniel growls, apparently seeing him for the first time. Right, so that situation hasn’t bettered itself in . . . however long he’d been gone. No surprise there, he supposes.

Before Lucifer can respond, Chloe does, a hard edge of frost in her voice. “He’s literally been to Hell and back. He’s here for me and for Trixie so lay off, Dan. This isn’t about you, or me, or Lucifer. This is about finding Trixie.”

She nods with her chin to the kitchen, and Lucifer slowly leads her in that direction. It’s amazing she’s coherent, yet alone can walk. Amenadiel slept for six hours when Maze healed him with a feather, and he was divine. A mortal should be asleep for at least that long, but then the Detective never reacts as other mortals would to anything from his world. She leans in towards Dan once she’s sure they are out of range of the unis. “They said something weird to me when they left, Dan. The guy who shot me said Trixie would be safe if you do as you’re told. Do you know anything about that?”

Daniel shook his head, looking confused. And well look at that, Daniel’s cell phone chose that exact moment to ring. Detective Espinoza answers the phone, his eyes widening as he listens to the caller on the other end. He steps quickly off to the bathroom. Lucifer strains his divine ears, but there are too many other voices in the room for him to pick up anything of use.

The Detective leans her forehead on him again, swaying slightly. He tightens his grip on her. It wouldn’t do at all to have her fall on the kitchen floor.

She looks at him through tired eyes, really seeing him for maybe the first time since he arrived. Her eyes bore into his for an immeasurable time, before taking in his shoulders and his hair. The edge of her mouth quirks into a tired half-smile. “Um, you look like, well, Hell,” she says. She carefully reaches her hand up and runs it through his hair. Her reward is a rain of ash, some of which falls onto her. “And now, so do I.”

He shakes his head. “Hardly, Detective.” She looks Heaven-sent, as always. Here and alive and in his arms. They will handle whatever comes next. “You simply look like you’ve had a very rough day.”

Her hand falls back by her side and she slumps against him. “It’s been a rough year, Lucifer, but I think dying, or almost dying, and watching Trixie get taken—yeah, rough doesn’t cover it. I’m so tired. Why am I so tired?”

He half carries, half leads her back to the couch. “Side-effect of divine healing, I’m afraid. I’m amazed you’re still coherent. I’ve heard it’s a positively exhausting process.”

She makes a non-committal sound and sinks gratefully into the couch. He sits next to her, the sides of their thighs touching. He opens an arm and she leans into his side, then hisses as she reapply’s the ice pack to her face.

It’s been a rough year. So, a year then. He remembers the Detective’s phone, that he shoved in his pocket after calling Maze. He pulls it out. May 9th. He wonders if he’ll sound like a raving lunatic if
he asks a uni to confirm the year. His eyes find the spot where the Detective keeps her calendar. It’s a different calendar than the one he knew. This one is—bloody hell, she’s replaced her beaches calendar with one with classic cars. He isn’t entirely sure what to think of that. Sure enough though, May 2020 is there at the top, right under an Aston Martin.

Daniel steps out of the bathroom and Lucifer can’t help but notice he looks positively green. He nudges the Detective, who has let her eyes drift closed as she leans on his shoulder. She snaps to attention when she sees Daniel, tries to stand again, then thinks better of it. “I know what they want,” Daniel growls. He’s headed for the door.

“Dan, wait,” the Detective calls, trying to stand up again and bullocks, she is falling suddenly as her knees give way. He plucks her off the floor and again half carries, half drags her. The EMTs protest but he ignores them. They make it to the car park in front of the building before they catch up to Daniel.

A tall Hispanic man Lucifer remembers as Detective Ochoa is talking to Daniel. He looks up at the Detective, and then does a double take when he sees Lucifer.

Lucifer tugs the Detective along to reach Ochoa before he leaves Daniel’s side, thereby leaving Daniel free to go do whatever the hell it is he is doing.

"Decker, are you okay?" Ochoa asks. “That’s a lot of blood.”

“Not all mine, sir,” the detective says. “Just feeling very weak. Got kicked in the face. Didn’t feel great. But they took my daughter, sir.”

“Yeah, Espinoza was filling me in. I am sorry Decker, but you have to let us do our jobs. You know we’ll get the bastards.”

Lucifer already knows his own response to this, but he is surprised when the Detective agrees. “Of course, sir. We’re much too close. We know the department will do what they can.”

Even after all this time, she’s still frustratingly complex. Lucifer knows she has no intention of sitting idly by while her daughter is missing. He realizes she is already planning on looking into this on her own. He’s surprised she is so willing to go rogue, rather than sit in the precinct and do it by the books.

Ochoa is now eying Lucifer speculatively. “You’re a very hard man to reach, Mr. Morningstar.” Ochoa tilts his head, no doubt taking in Lucifer’s wrinkled suit, the ash in his hair, and the blood-ash putty that is now caked on his knees. “When I last spoke with Detective Decker she said you were unreachable. That was”—he glanced at his watch—“about six hours ago. Do you care to explain why you’re here, Mr. Morningstar, and why the precinct hasn't been able to reach you?”

Not really, Lucifer thinks, but he knows that response won't do. “I had a feeling I might be needed, Lieutenant Ochoa. My old number will be back in service in the next hour or so, should you need me. Now, if you’ll excuse us,” he glances down at the Detective, “I want to get her out of here.”

Ochoa nods. “I’ll be in touch. Decker, Espinoza, I’ll oversee this one personally, you have my word. Don’t worry about the Flores case, I’ll reassign it when I get back to the precinct.”

Daniel and the Detective nodded their thanks. As soon as Ochoa was on his way, Lucifer leveled a look at Daniel. “Well then, out with it, what was the call?”

Daniel, always the douche, shakes his head. “Not here. We need to go . . .”
The Detective finishes for him. “The penthouse. Let’s use the penthouse. Lucifer can get us anything we need.” Lucifer smiles at the absolutely certainty in her voice.

Daniel nods. “Fine. I’ll meet you there.”

The Detective groans. “My keys are in the apartment.”

Lucifer is already shaking his head, feeling the clock that measures the child’s chances ticking. “We most certainly are not going back there. Sorry Daniel, but carpool it is. Hope you don’t mind blood and ash and all that nonsense.”

He starts to pull the Detective to the front seat but she shakes her head, tightening her hold on his arm. “No.” She says. “I stay with you, Lucifer. For as long as I can.” She throws an apologetic look at her ex as she stumbles into the back seat. “Sorry, Dan.” Daniel, surprisingly, just shrugs.

They drive in silence. Lucifer uses Chloe’s phone to text Maze, updating her and asking her to meet them at the penthouse. Even though he’s already asked a lot of her, he adds to the list. He asks her to see that his phone is turned back on and that someone picks up clean clothes for the Detective. He types a quick list of what they’ll need if they’re going to run an investigation from his place. A computer, a white board, his car, cash. Weapons, since the Detective’s service gun has been taken. He can almost imagine Maze’s glee at the last item. Thank you, Maze. He types. He really must find an appropriate way to thank her when this is over.

The Detective is leaning heavily on him, but he knows she’s awake because she’s holding his hand in both of hers, turning it hand over again and again as she traces the lines on his palm. It’s exquisite. There’s so much unsaid between them that he doesn’t even know where to begin, and he knows now is not the time. He doesn’t know what the last year has held for her, but for now she seems glad that he is there, and that’s the most he can hope for. They must find Beatrice, and quickly. Everything else is secondary until she is found. His heart does a strange flutter at the thought of her with armed thugs. The Detective said she had fought them. The child is so small and fierce and full of life. For the second time that night, he sends a prayer to his bastard father, this time for the protection of the offspring. Whether Dad listens or not, he doesn’t know, but it can’t hurt. Apparently Beatrice can be added to the list, along with the Detective, that the rules do not apply for. This revelation does not surprise him in the least. Father, if you can find it in you to watch over Beatrice until we find her . . . He makes no vows in return, though. No agreements. He has nothing to offer, other than his continued service in Hell, and he won’t allow his Father to think he’s doing that for him. His reasons for returning to that Dad-forsaken place are far more human. Lucifer knows he has nothing to bargain with, and it makes his stomach sour.

They pull into the garage, and Lucifer helps Chloe to the elevator. She leans heavily into him as it lurches into a motion, a slight moan leaving her lips, as if she’s going to be sick. Maze has outdone herself, as the penthouse looks just as it did when he left. The dust covers have been removed. His fingers itch at the sight of the piano. There will be ample time for that later, he supposes.

Daniel flops himself down on the nearest couch, tenting his hands over his knees. He rests his forehead on his hands. Lucifer raises an eyebrow at the Detective. What now? He asks, unspoken. She breathes for a moment, searching his face. Then she nods to his bedroom and the in-suite bathroom. “Go shower,” she says quietly. “Let me talk to Dan and figure out what’s going on.”

Lucifer nods, but his hands explicably tighten around her waist. It’s irrational, but he doesn’t want to leave her side, not when less than an hour before she had been bleeding out in his arms after a century in Hell without her. Her face changes, and he’s certain that her eyes are reflecting what she sees in his. Fear and desperation and want. She carefully leans up and presses a soft kiss to his lips, then tilts her forehead to touch his. Her lips move against his as she speaks, they are so close. “I’ll
be right here. I don’t go anywhere without you, you don’t go anywhere without me, okay?” He 
nods once, holding her eyes and finding himself in them. “Thank you,” she whispers. 

He pulls back a little, to see her face, confused. “Whatever for, Detective?” 

“For coming back.” As if there were any other options for him, any place he’d rather be. He can’t 
abide by it, and everything he’d kept so neatly packaged up for the sake of what needed to be done 
explodes out of its box. 

It’s his turn to kiss her, and he knows he’s neither gentle nor soft. It’s hard and fast and leaves them 
both breathless, but he needs her to understand this, and just in case there isn’t another opportunity, 
now is as good a time as any. He’s careful not to bump her nose or her bruised face, but he holds 
nothing back. “Chloe,” he says, his voice laced with desperation. He frames her face with his 
hands, wills his fingertips to imprint the truth of his words on her skin. “There is nothing in Heaven 
or Hell or anywhere in between that would keep me from coming to your aid. Wherever you are, 
whatever it is, if you ask me to, I will come. For you, for Beatrice. Don’t ever forget that.” 

She lets out a little huff of air, lets her forehead fall against his chest again. She nods, holds him a 
little longer. Finally she sighs and says, “Go, so you can come back and we can find Trixie.” Her 
voice is soft and laced with longing. She sounds so very tired. He knows that finding Beatrice can 
not be an if, because if something happens to her it will destroy the Detective, and by extension, 
Lucifer knows it will destroy him, too. 

Lucifer deposits her on the couch across from Daniel, and then goes to wash the residue of Hell from 
him. His personal Hell, he realizes as he scrubs himself under the too-hot shower, is the Detective’s 
blood—Chloe’s blood—dried and dark on his hands. As he scrubs it away, he watches it mix with 
the ash as it spins down the drain.
Beneath the Surface

Chapter Summary

She looks at Dan, who is examining the floor between his feet. He is the opposite of focused or purpose-driven, at the moment. She leans her head back against the Italian Leather Sofa and wishes her ex-husband would get his shit together, just this once. “Come on, Dan. What do they want?”

When Lucifer plays the piano, he plays “Don't Give Up on Me” on the Piano: (Listen to it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_brSyzoh4g)

Thank you all for the comments and kudos - glad this story is being enjoyed. I'm going to shoot for updates on Tuesday/Friday until it's complete. I just finished writing the next chapter and it's a MONSTER at over 7,000 words, so I now anticipate this story taking about 8 chapters to complete. Thank you so much for coming along on the ride!

Chloe watches Lucifer disappear into his room and tries to stop the panic that rises in her throat. He’s back, and she can hardly believe it. Just hours before she had been so certain she would not see him again. She knows he needs that shower, because with everything else that’s going on, the last thing she needs is for Dan to really think about all the comments about ash and Hell, and put that together with Lucifer’s disheveled, ash-covered appearance. She just can’t believe Lucifer is back. Her heart is still racing from his kiss, and the absolute intensity and the conviction of the words he had spoken. On top of that, she feels so dizzy, so light-headed, so tired. She looks down at the garish dark red stain on her shirt. Side effect of divine healing, I’m afraid. She should be dead, and she knows the only reason that she isn’t is because Lucifer heard her pray for him and came back. Wherever you are, whatever it is, if you ask me to, I will come. As far as vows go, Chloe knows that this is as good as they come. He had heard her. Whatever else was true, he had come back simply because he had heard her and had known that she needed him. He’d saved her, and she knew that working together, they would get Trix back. Just knowing Lucifer was here, that she didn’t have to face this nightmare alone, makes all the difference. She’s still scared to death of all the things that can go wrong, but she also feels focused and ready for a fight.

She looks at Dan, who is examining the floor between his feet. He is the opposite of focused or purpose-driven, at the moment. She leans her head back against the Italian Leather Sofa and wishes her ex-husband would get his shit together, just this once. “Come on, Dan. What do they want?”

She hears Dan exhale as she closes her eyes. “They want me to remove any and all evidence in the Teirning case.” He waits a beat. “And, get this, they want me to get that fucker’s ring out of evidence and give it back to him. Can you believe that? This asshole really does think he’s above the law.”

Chloe thinks about that. “All the evidence?”

“Case files, photographs, everything. They want him to get off scot-free. Mistrial declared, back to a life of high crime he goes.”

Chloe pushes against her too-tired brain and thinks about what Dan is saying. She thinks about the case, and how they fell into it. They had caught a case that lead them to Teirning’s son, Julian. The
little bastard had lawyered up under Daddy’s money, and then they had found out he also was into human trafficking. A cop died, Lucifer lost it and went rogue. Julian’s back got broken (by Lucifer, and oh man but she can’t handle thinking about that right now) and that was the beginning of the end. Daddy-dearest killed who he thought was responsible (an innocent man, because hello, it was Lucifer). Somehow Teirning then found out it was Lucifer who broke Julian’s back. They were able to piece together enough to arrest Teirning on conspiracy to commit murder and also for the attempted murder of Lucifer at the penthouse.

Chloe feels the wheels in her brain turn. She pushes away the exhaustion and wills her brain to focus. The goal of taking Trixie is to erase the evidence that incriminates Teirning. She mentally begins working backward. *Come on, tired brain, don’t quit on me yet. For Trixie.* Teirning probably found out about Trixie’s involvement because she was at the penthouse when the attempted hit on Lucifer happened. That wouldn’t be hard information for him to find. Chloe purses her lips. How did Teirning find out about Lucifer? Who else knew about Lucifer’s involvement? She knew, because he told her. Eve knew, because she was with him. (*Goaded him,* Chloe thought, but then pushed it aside.) *Oh shit.* A memory makes things click, and she doesn’t like the way the puzzle suddenly looks.

“Dan?”

“Yeah?”

“Why do you think Teirning reached out to you? He never met you during the investigation.” She keeps her eyes closed, afraid to look up. The moments slide by, but Dan says nothing. His silence speaks volumes.

She remembers interviewing Julian after his back was broken. Dan pulling her aside. *Julian’s reaction,* he’d said, *does it look familiar to you? I think Lucifer did this.*

He wouldn’t have. He couldn’t have. “Dan.” She says, because he still hasn’t said a word. Teirning had put a hit out on Lucifer. (She thinks about the Palmetto case and how much she suffered, how he always acted so righteous.) “Dan, tell me you didn’t.”

Silence. Why would Teirning attempt to use Trixie for leverage with Dan? Dan shouldn’t have been on Teirning’s radar, except as a thread of connection. But she remembers how angry Dan was with Lucifer, how much he blamed her for Charlotte during that time. She feels sick. Angry enough to give Lucifer’s name to Teirning? Enough to let him get killed?

She pinches her eyes closed for a bit longer, unable to believe this. Perfect memories. Lucifer, on his balcony, six bloodless bullet holes in his shirt. Trixie, hidden behind Eve’s dress. If Lucifer hadn’t been, well, *Lucifer,* she’s absolutely certain all three of them would have been dead.

She raises her head. Looks at her ex-husband. His elbows rest on his knees. His hands are open, his face resting in them.

“Unfortunately, he did.” Lucifer, leaning against the door frame, looking much more like his usual self. He wore dress pants and a shirt, cuffs rolled up to expose his forearms. “Can’t say I blame you for that bit, Daniel. I certainly deserved to be punished for that misdeed. I wasn’t myself, but that’s no excuse.”

Chloe tries to stand, and damn it, she can’t. “You knew?” She spat out.

Lucifer meets her eyes, and she sees more than she can even begin to process. She thinks she sees regret, but also understanding too, and the thing in his eyes she saw when he found out she was
plotting to send her back to Hell. She feels like she may throw up when she realizes it’s the part of him that is waiting for her to turn around and run again. “I suspected,” he says. “I investigated and my suspicions were confirmed.”

“But you didn’t say anything!” She still can’t believe this is happening.

“He wasn’t wrong detective, I was,” Lucifer says. “You said it yourself, remember? I knew it was wrong and I did it anyway. By the time I figured it out, I had far more pressing, far more monstrous issues to deal with.”

Devil wings, unconcealable Devil skin, demons unleashed on Earth. Leaving for Hell. Right. Chloe turns and glares at Dan. “You almost got Trixie killed that night, Dan.”

“I know!” He roars, standing up. “Christ, Chloe, you think I don’t know that? You think I don’t think about that, every damn day? Why do you think I’ve been such a mess. Yes, I miss Charlotte, but I have to think about what almost happened, have to live with what almost happened.”

Chloe thinks about the treading water thing, and her hazy impressions of Dan from her own grief. Dan hadn’t been drowning because of Charlotte, or at least not just because of Charlotte. He’d been consumed by guilt. “And now Teirning has Trixie, or at least Teirning’s men.”

Dan nods, grinding his teeth. “And he knows I’m not above breaking the rules to get what I want. Whatever happens, I get to live with that, too.” His words are laced with hatred, and Chloe knows for once it has nothing at all to do with Lucifer. She's angry with him, but she also knows that he needs to get get with the program, because he's the one the demands were made to. Evidence in exchange for Trixie’s life.

Lucifer comes down the stairs, sits at the piano. He opens the lid and stares at the ebony keys.

“Daniel, if I may,” he says softly. “I know you despise me, but I know more than a little about self-hatred and blaming yourself. I’ve done more things that I regret than I care to think about. The thing I have learned is that you can either live with your mistakes or let them consume you.” Chloe thinks about Lucifer, red and scarred, with bat-like wings. She thinks about how she once recoiled at his face, without really thinking about the pain behind it. “Self-hatred does no good, and if you decide to let it consume you, you best prepare to take others down with your ship.” He meets Chloe’s eyes. “Often times we put those we care about in grave danger, without that being the intention.”

Dan starts to shake his head, starts to speak, but Chloe puts up her hand, imploring him to listen. Lucifer slides his hands over the keys without pressing any of them down, tracing the movement with his eyes. “However you feel about me, you never meant for any harm to fall on Beatrice. You love her. A very wise soul once told me that you have to stop taking responsibility for things you can’t control. You have to forgive yourself. Otherwise it will consume you, and I can tell you firsthand, it isn’t a pleasant experience.”

As if the temptation is too great to resist any longer, Lucifer begins to stroke the piano keys, and Chloe listens as he begins to pull a beautiful, soft melody that is somewhat familiar from them. She watches his face relax and he seems to sink into the music. She knows he's giving her and Dan a few moments. She manages to get up, sits next to Dan and puts her hands over his. “Whatever happened, what’s important now is that we find Trixie. That’s all that matters. But Dan, we’ve all done things, bad things, that we regret. Things that hurt people.”

Dan scoffs. “Chloe, you’ve never done a bad thing.”

She shakes her head. She listens to the gentle refrains Lucifer coaxes from the piano. She thinks of
his eyes as he tells he thinks she’ll run if she sees who she truly is. She thinks about how she did just that. “You’re wrong about that you know. A year and a half ago, I think I would have agreed with you, because I was that self-righteous.” She looks at Lucifer again, feels her heart constrict at the bittersweet chords he plays, then takes Dan’s hand. “Part of caring about someone is accepting who they are, flaws and all, instead of denying or ignoring who they are. Do whatever you need to, Dan, but you’ve got to deal with this. For Trixie, and for yourself, too.”


“We find Trixie,” Chloe finished. Dan nods, squeezing her hands back.

Maze, always one to make an entrance, took that moment to arrive, as Lucifer pulls the last chord from the piano. Chloe thinks he looks so at peace at that moment, and she tries to capture the memory of him there to hold, forever. “Hello, Maze,” he greets. “I hope you’ve forgiven me for not taking you back.”

Maze pushes a rolling white board off the elevator. “Not if you don’t come help,” she growls.

“Right then,” Lucifer says, closing the piano. He meets Chloe’s eyes, raises his eyebrows in a way that makes her smile, then turns to help. He grabs two huge black bags from the elevator. Dan gets up and roles the board toward the couches. When Chloe starts to rise, Lucifer tsks at her. “No Detective, if you fall on the floor, it’s no help at all. So perhaps you should just stay put.”

Chloe groans and sinks back on the couch. While she’s positively elated to not be dead, exhaustion from divine healing sucks.

“You look like shit, Decker,” Maze declares, dropping an overnight bag in Chloe’s lap. “That’s a lot of blood,” she says, nodding to Chloe’s stomach.

Lucifer clears his throat. “We’ve had an Amenadiel post Malcom situation, Maze,” he says cryptically.

Maze makes a face that seems to imply this makes perfect sense. “That explains why she looks like she’s drunk.”

“I do not!” She protests, at the same time says, “What is an Amenadiel post Malcom situation?”

Maze shakes her head at him. “Long story, Dan.” She nods to the overnight bag. “There’s a change of clothes and toiletries in there. What’s the latest on the kid?”

“We know why they took her,” Chloe said, “but we need the who, specifically, and the where.”

“And,” Dan says, “we need to hammer out what our moves need to be with Teirning’s demands.”

Chloe motions for the board, so Dan drags it closer. Teirning’s name goes on it, and then she writes Dead Eyes, Broken Nose, and Baldy under it. She draws a line connecting Teirning’s name to the three monikers. “The three guys who broke into my apartment have to be working for Teirning,” she explains to no one in particular.

Lucifer hands Chloe her phone. “Already texted Ms. Lopez and asked her to send over pictures of Mr. Teirning’s known associates, so perhaps you can find the names of those three.”

“Good. I think we should pay a visit to Teirning at LAC. Lieutenant Ochoa asked me earlier today . . . yesterday, I guess, if I knew how to get ahold of you regarding testifying,” she says to Lucifer. “If he really wants all the evidence that implicates him gone . . .”
Lucifer inclines his head to her, “Perhaps it was no accident you were shot when they took Beatrice.”

Chloe nods. “Exactly.” It’s possible one of their objectives had been to kill her.

Lucifer looks at her thoughtfully, pursing his lips. “I don’t suppose you’d consider staying here? Maybe it’s best not to alert him of your status among the living, lest he try again.”

“Not a chance,” she says, without hesitation. Trixie is out there, somewhere, and she needs to do something, even though she is presently so tired she can’t even stand up.

“Right, I was rather afraid of that,” Lucifer sighs.

Maze brings a laptop over to Chloe. “Ella has already emailed pictures,” she says, turning the computer so Chloe can see it. “See if any of those look familiar.” Chloe begins to flip through the pictures.

Dan picks up his phone. “I’ll ask her to do a property search, too. What the hell is she even doing at work at this hour?”

His phone dings back a moment later, and he answers his own question. “Hm, apparently the LT called for all hands on deck. They are taking point on this with Missing Persons assisting.”

Chloe momentarily turns away from the laptop and writes “Where?” on the board. She adds Dan’s name and lists their demands, puts an arrow between Dan and Teirning and write’s Lucifer’s name along the arrow. She adds her own name and Lucifer’s next to Dan’s. She taps the marker on the board, thinking about who else was directly involved. “Uh, Lucifer, where’s Eve?”

He blinks at her slowly. “Not too sure, Detective. I was rather indisposed whilst I was away, and have been rather busy since I arrived back in town.”

She laughs, which is ridiculous. He has been rather busy, first ruling over Hell and then using an angel feather to heal her fatal gunshot wound and circling the wagons so they could find Trixie. “Yeah, okay, that part’s true.”

Dan looks to Maze, a brow quirked. Interesting.

Maze shrugs. “She was in the Cascades the last time I talked to her. Soul searching, she said.”

Chloe adds Eve to the board with a question mark. “Do you think she’ll be safe?” She asks to no one in particular.

Lucifer shrugs. “She’s got cash, and lots of it. Not only is cash king, but it's also untraceable if you're looking to find someone.” Interesting, Chloe thinks again. Of course, Lucifer has plenty of that to go around.

“What’s she driving?” If the car is Lucifer’s, it increases the chances of Teirning finding her.

“A car.” Lucifer deadpans. Chloe rolls her eyes, which makes her light-headed. Lucifer grins though. “Oh, how I have missed that Detective. Could you do it again?” He sounds positively gleeful. When she makes a face at him, he goes on with, “Oh, fine, you’re no fun then.” She’s missed this banter so much, and it lifts her spirits that they can fall back into the same routines, even with the stakes as high as they are. “It’s technically mine but the title won’t trace back. It was bought in cash and in one of the many names that are at least six degrees from the Devil.” Lucifer walks to the bar, peruses the options, and plucks down a bottle. Pouring himself a very full glass, he
Chloe puts two dashed lines above Eve’s name, indicating that the connection between her and Teirning isn’t strong. “Maze, maybe call her and ask her to be careful, okay? Have her let us know if she thinks someone’s on to her.” No matter what happened with Eve and Lucifer, Chloe can not ignore that fact that Eve saved Trixie’s life. She had also genuinely liked her, when she wasn’t convincing Lucifer to take punishment to the next level (or enticing him to have orgies in the penthouse. Gross.)

Chloe thinks about Ochoa and how much she respects the man. “We need to decide how much we share with the LT.” She turns back to the photos and continues looking for the three musketeers.

Dan crosses his arms and paces in front of the bar. “If we share, maybe we find Trixie faster.”

Maze unzips a large black duffle and brings out two handguns. She places them on the couch next to Chloe. Practical, she supposes, since she currently has no gun. “Happy birthday, Decker!” Maze opines. Then she picks up two knives and flips them back and forth. “Or they get in the way,” she says to Dan, speaking of the police.

Dan inclines his head. “Or that.”

Bingo. Chloe stops flipping and reads the name out loud. “Enrique Villalobos.” Chloe says, turning the computer so the others can see. She writes his name under Broken Nose. She forwards the picture to Dan so he can look into him, then continues flipping through the pictures. She finds Dead Eyes next. Devin Rancor, and of course he’s ex-military, dishonorable discharge. She writes his name up and forwards the picture. Two down, one to go.

Dan releases a big breath. “What if we let the LT in on everything, and then I go through the motions of giving Teirning what he wants. Ochoa can monitor for anything that incriminates Teirning.”

Chloe pauses, considers. It’s the way to do things by the book. Except . . . “There’s a chance he won’t let you go through the motions, though Dan. Destroying evidence, even pretending to, is pretty big.” Usually Chloe is all for playing by the book, but Trixie’s life is at stake.

Dan nods. “I can actually go through the motions, then. The caller was very specific about what I’m supposed to do. I am to destroy all digital files. I collect all the evidence, including the ring, and take it to a safety deposit box at LA Mutual. I’m to deliver the key to the safety deposit box to a bench across the street, and then they will call once everything is confirmed with Trixie’s location. I think I should give the evidence to Maze and she can take it to the safety deposit box. I’ll go to the LT, tell him what I’ve done, and give him digital backup of everything I’ve destroyed or given Maze.”

Chloe stops what she’s doing and stares at Dan. “That will mean your job.”

“Small price to pay for our daughter, Chloe.” He says.

He isn’t wrong.

“It will allow Ochoa to put eyes on the safety deposit box and track what happens next, in case things go sideways.”

Chloe’s stomach flips as she considers what sideways means, in this instance. *Trixie, laying still on the floor after being hit in the head with the butt of her gun.* “It will look like you complied with their demands because you will have done exactly what they asked,” Chloe says, thinking through the plans for flaws. “I trust Ochoa to keep a tight lid on the fact you copied files.” She knows they have
to do that part, because no matter what happens, Teirning can absolutely not get away with his crimes.

Dan nods. “We keep working on this from both sides. Hopefully we find where they are keeping Trixie first.”

Chloe leans her head back on the couch again, closing her eyes. This is too much. “And if we don’t,” she says softly, “we meet their demands and hope they give her back to us.” It was a big risk. They needed to find her, and fast.

Lucifer speaks from his perch by the bar. “LA Mutual opens at nine.” He’d been so quiet, Chloe had momentarily forgotten he was there.

They are all quiet for a moment. It’s a little after two in the morning. Maze is standing by the windows, looking over the balcony. Lucifer considers the amber liquid in his glass. They have seven hours before they can even hope of making headway. Meanwhile, her daughter is alone with people who could hurt her. They need to talk to Teirning. “I’m going to call LAC and set up a meeting with Teirning at 7. I think that’s the earliest they’ll let us talk to him. It will take about two hours to drive out there at this time of day.”

“Not if I’m driving,” Lucifer says.

“You’re definitely driving, since I can barely stand,” she says, then returns to flipping through the pictures.

She’s been at it for another twenty minutes before she finds Baldy. Marcus Lorenzo. She writes the name on the board, forwards the picture to Dan. She wracks her brain for what else they can do with the information given. Dan will look into the three men. Ella is looking for properties associated to Teirning to come up with a short list of where they could be holding Trixie. There isn’t much else to do, at the time being. She looks down at her blood-stained pajamas, and knows it’s time to at least attempt to clean herself up. She feels suddenly drained, more tired than she’s maybe ever been in her life. As if Lucifer can read her mind, he’s suddenly there, offering a hand to pull her to her feet. He plucks up the bag that Maze has brought her and leads her toward the bedroom.

“You should absolutely rest,” he says softly as he helps her up the steps.

“It feels wrong,” she says, voicing the worry in her heart, “to rest when she’s not safe.”

“Your body has been through a huge trauma, Detective,” he says softly. “You can’t do your best if you don’t let it rest.”

She makes a non-committal sound, but she knows he’s right. She’s still in her bloody pajamas. She’d really like a shower, but she isn’t sure she can stand upright. Now that they at least have a plan, she is feeling so, so very tired.

Lucifer guides her to the bathroom. She feels so heavy, like her limbs are weighted down. He seems to understand, and lifts her, gently sitting her on the bathroom countertop. He reaches for the buttons on her pajama shirt, then pauses. “May I?” He asks.

She scoffs at him. “Well, I certainly can’t, so why not.” She puts all her effort into not falling over. She’s dreamed of Lucifer undressing her so many times, but in every single one of those dreams she was an active participant. At the moment she feels like a rag doll. He carefully undoes the buttons. She watches his hands, watching the play of muscles in his forearms.

He removes her pajama shirt, then reaches for a washcloth. He steadies her with one hand as he
wets it, then slowly wipes any remaining dried blood from her stomach. He moves up to her neck, cleaning away the last vestiges of her nose bleed. She’s naked from the waist up, she realizes, and he’s being so careful, so tender. His eyes are soft, and other than looking at the areas he is cleaning, they spend most of their time looking at her face.

“You’re going to sleep now,” he says, “so I’m going to put you in one of my shirts. Maze brought you some clothes for morning.”

She’s so tired. His hands moving over her is relaxing, and she knows if she doesn’t keep talking, she’ll fall asleep. “Lucifer?” He uses a new washcloth to remove dried blood from her hairline.

“Yes, Detective?” He produces a grey dress shirt, feeds first one of her arms through, then the other before pulling it over her.

“What was the ‘Amenadiel post Malcom’ situation?” He starts doing the buttons of the shirt, and she watches his forearms again, his fingers as the work each button into the hole. There’s so much strength in him, but a gentleness, too. She thinks of him alone in hell for the past year, with nothing fine to touch, with no one to touch him in a gentle way, and her heart hurts.

“Malcolm used one of Maze’s knives on Amenadiel. He would have died, had Maze not kept a feather from my original wings.”

“But…” Chloe wrinkles her brow in confusion. Amenadiel, like Lucifer, is supposed to be invulnerable. “I don’t understand.”

He finishes the buttons, stands her up and slides her pajama pants down. Yup, this was certainly not how she had ever imagined the first time Lucifer undressing her going. He helps her toward his bed.

“The knives Maze brought with her are made of hell-forged steel.” He says, pulling back the covers. “While a mortal weapon can not harm a celestial, a hell forged blade has the ability to destroy us.”

“Oh,” she says softly, thinking about that. Destroy, as in gone forever. She swallows. There’s a million things she still doesn't understand, that they still need to talk about. The more she learns, the more complicated everything seems. He situates her in the bed. She's facing him, watches as he perches on the side of his bed. She feels boneless, but has something else she needs to know, struggling to stay lucid. "Lucifer?"

"Hmm?"

"Why didn't you tell me about Dan?"

"It didn't matter, Detective. He was wrong, but his guilt was more than enough of a consequence. It would only have hurt you to know that he did it. He didn't mean to harm anyone but me.”

She thinks about that. She would have been furious if she’d found out. She can’t even address the fact that Lucifer was so understanding of Dan’s actions that could have resulted in Lucifer’s own death. The bed is so soft, the sheets feel like magic against her skin. She tries to push against the sleepiness enveloping her again, and this time, it refuses to budge.

“Sleep, Detective. You should be quite proud, you've managed to stay awake for nearly three hours now. Not even God's favorite son could do that.” His tone is soft and teasing. She’s sure she’ll never take his voice for granted again, after living for so long without it.

“You’ll stay?” She is afraid that if she surrenders to the darkness, she’ll wake to find him gone. When she says it, she wants it to mean forever.
He palms her face and she leans in to him. “As long as you need me to,” he says.

She reaches up and places her hand over his, threading her fingers into the valleys of his. She pulls both their hands to her heart. He’s the anchor in the darkness, the thing that will keep her safely moored until dawn rises again. “I’ll always need you, Lucifer, don’t you know that yet?” She feels the darkness roll over her, soft and welcoming. She finally surrenders.
Above-Board

Chapter Summary

a·bove board
/əˈbəvˌbôrd/
adjective
I.
legitimate, honest, and open.
"we felt the judging was all above board and fair"
synonyms: honest, fair, open, frank, straight, overt, candid, forthright, unconcealed, trustworthy, unequivocal.

It is sometimes suggested that the board in question is the deck of a ship and that this term comes from the seafaring practice of concealing pirates below decks (below board) in order to lull the crews of victim ships into a false sense of security. The opposite, 'above board' was considered to symbolize openness and fairness.

This chapter is a monster. Happy reading! And if you didn't see the announcement today, Netflix has increased it's order for Season 5 to 16 Episodes instead of 10. Six more hours of our lovely characters!
Also, I had an oops and accidentally posted Ch 6 before posting this, so if you ended up with that and were confused, apologies! I have no idea what I did there.
Unbeta'd so all mistakes are MINE!

Lucifer simply watches her sleep for awhile. It’s such a small, simple pleasure he’s been afforded so few times, and even fewer still when he eliminates all situations that involve her being in a hospital. He watches the soft rise and fall of her chest, and he thinks again of how close he came to losing her. This entire situation is an unexpected second chance, in more ways than one, and he knows that he will not be able to leave immediately once Beatrice is found. He burns for her, and knows he will burn for her from now until his last day. It’s a small price to pay, but he’s not sure how he feels about the final words she uttered as she fell asleep. I’ll always need you, Lucifer, don’t you know that yet?

It’s been almost a year since he left her standing on that balcony after she told him she loved him, after she begged him not to leave. Her words were so very close to the night that she collared the camera man who had killed a star of the reality show The Cabin. She had still been reeling from his Devil face, trying to make sense of it (or so he had thought), and he had just jumped in front of an axe for her. She’d held the axe to his chest, and asked if it would kill him if she pressed it into his chest. She was just coming to terms with the fact that being close to her made him vulnerable, having watched him survive being blown up unscathed and then subsequently bleed from a simple piece of broken glass. But you jumped in front of it anyway? She had whispered Yes, and I’d do it again, and again. Don’t you know that, Detective? She had just shaken her head. By that time, he had been so sure about the way that he felt about her, and absolutely certain that he would do anything to keep her alive. As it was, he had already been back to hell twice since he’d met her. It hadn’t really occurred to him that she didn’t completely understand the depth of his feelings. Of course, that had been put in perspective when he’d found out a short time later that she’d actually been plotting to send him back to hell.
Is it possible that the year of his absence has been as lonely for her as it has been for him, human connections not withstanding? A mortal life is a relatively short one, and a year is a long time to pine for a lost love. While away in Hell, Lucifer had reconciled himself with the fact that sooner or later, she would move on from the impossibility of loving the Devil himself. *I'll always need you, Lucifer, don't you know that yet?*

He watches her awhile longer, then carefully removes his hand and rises. He needs to talk to Maze. He finds her sitting on the floor, the laptop in front of her. She unpacked a small printer and is printing photos of the three men Chloe has identified, as well as summaries Ms. Lopez must have put together for each man. Dan sits at the bar, scrolling through something on his phone—probably Teirming’s properties. They are both focused on the task of recovering the child, and he knows that Maze had done a great deal to make their job easier. “Really, Maze, I can’t thank you enough for this.”

“I’d do anything for the kid, Lucifer, you know that.”

He nods, then steels himself. “Since I’ve left . . .” He starts, but doesn’t know how to finish.

She stops what she’s doing, meets his eyes, understanding his unspoken question. He thinks she’s changed, in more ways than one, in the year/century he has been away. “You should ask her, you know.”

“There hasn’t been time,” he says softly, “and it hardly seems appropriate, with Beatrice in danger.”

“How did you know to come?” Maze asks.

“She prayed to me for help.” Lucifer can’t believe that it never occurred to him to explain to her how to do that before he left. If she hadn’t done it, she would be dead, and again he feels the weight of that sink in.

“Decker never asks for help.” Maze scoffed. “You said she’d been shot. How bad? Saw the blood on her shirt.”

He closes his eyes against the perfect memory of the pool of her blood surrounding him, his hands covered in her blood, and the Detective, pale and still. “She was moments from leaving the Earthly plane, Mazikeen. It was far too close.”

He watches her swallow. Despite her behavior with Cain, Lucifer knows the Detective is important to Maze. “She wasn’t okay, Lucifer. She barely said more then ‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’ to me for a long time. It took her *months* to actually talk to Linda or come to the house. She would look at Charlie, or watch Linda and Amenadiel together, and her face—she’d look like someone kicked a dog. If it weren’t for Trixie . . . something changed after the kid’s birthday in February, but it still wasn’t good. Just less bad.”

He nods. “Thank you for keeping them safe, Mazikeen. It wasn’t fair of me to leave without consulting you.” Maze had wanted to return to Hell so badly, for a time.

She tilts her head. “Then why did you?”

Lucifer sighs. “I couldn’t leave the Detective, or any of them really, without knowing you’d be here to watch over them.” It was a simple, selfish truth, and he hopes she can forgive him for it.

Maze bares her teeth. “Didn’t do Trixie any good, did it?” She asks, voice laced with bitterness.

“The Detective said she fought them, Maze,” he says thinking of the Detective recounting the
incident to Daniel. You taught her well. She’s clever and cunning, and we will find her.” He wills the words to be true, knows again that they must be.

“You must be tired,” Maze says. This, he thinks, is a very un-Maze thing to say. “You should rest.”

“Why, Maze, you are positively domestic,” he teases. She shrugs. “How is Charlie and the good Doctor?”

Maze smiles, a real smile that lights her eyes. “Charlie’s getting so big Lucifer. He rolls and sits up and bangs things and is starting to make words. He can stand and is so pleased with himself for it. It’s fascinating. He does something new every day.” If he had any doubts that Maze loves the little angel-human, the joy in her eyes and words erases them. "Linda is glad you’re back," she continues. "She’ll want to see you, before you return. She’s missed you, too. You made her cry.” Maze growls the last bit. He tries not to flinch at the reminder of his commitment.

He nods. “Of course. Any news from Amenadiel?”

“Maze shakes her head. “He left to check the gate when you texted. I don’t think he’s back yet.”

Lucifer purses his lips at that. His absence must be known, by now. While hours have passed here, it’s probably been weeks in Hell. “Thank you again, Mazikeen,” he says, squeezing her shoulder.

He’s infinitely surprised when she reaches up and squeezes his hand. “It’s good to have you home,” she says softly, and he can see in her eyes she means it. Clearly being an auntie has suited her well.

He strolls over to Daniel, who remains St the bar bent over his phone. “Find anything?”

Daniel looks up, startled. “There’s a lot of properties to go over, between Teirnings legal holdings and his shell companies,” he says, sounding agitated. “It’s going to take time.” His gaze shifts towards the dark bedroom. "How’s Chloe?"

“Resting,” Lucifer says. He searches for the right words, that won’t make Daniel roll his eyes or lead him on a tirade about Lucifer’s irresponsibility, and finds nothing suitable. “She’s exhausted from her ordeal.” The statement is insufficient for what she has survived.

Daniel looks at him, jaw working. “All that blood on her shirt . . .” he says, staring Lucifer down.

Lucifer doesn’t know what to say, can’t say much without letting the still-raw fear show. “Yes, quite,” is all he manages.

The other man’s next words surprise him. “I’m sorry. For sending Teirning after you, and for the way I acted.”

Lucifer inclines his head. Douche no more, perhaps? They had almost been friends, once. Before Charlotte. “Thank you, but it’s forgiven. I meant what I said earlier.” Daniel nods at him and an awkward silence stretches. “Right then,” Lucifer says. “I’m going to catch a few winks. It’s been ages since I’ve slept.”

Daniel has already turned back to the properties, but surprises Lucifer again. “No beds in Hell?” He asks without looking up.

Lucifer does a double take, but Daniel keeps right on scrolling. Lucifer has no idea if he’s being serious or not. Bullocks, might as well go big or go home. “Of course not, no rest for the wicked and all that. Wake us if there’s any news. Otherwise we’ll be up at 5 to prepare to meet Teirning.” He turns and heads for the bedroom, but he thinks Daniel may have laughed as he left.
The Detective had rolled onto her stomach, her face still turned to the area he occupied earlier. Lucifer contemplates, the shucked off his clothes and puts on a pair of silk boxers before he can overthink it. After a century of Hell, feeling the silk sheets against his skin is too much of a luxury to pass up. He sets an alarm on his phone for the morning, then pulls back the sheets and climbs into bed next to the Detective. He reaches out and tucks an errant lock, which has escaped from her bun, behind her ear. “I love you, Chloe,” he says softly. More than life, or the stars, more than the air I breathe, he doesn't say.

He’s surprised she she stirs and flops herself in his direction. She grabs his hand and pulls it to her chest again. “Lucifer,” she says sleepily. Her hand tightens and her forehead wrinkles in sleep. “Don’t go,” she says, soft and sad. His ancient, immortal heart constricts in his chest.

He scoots closer to her, presses a kiss to her forehead and then rests his forehead against hers. He falls asleep listening to her breathing, with the steady thrum of her heart against his hand. It is better than Heaven ever was.

**

Trixie Espinosa sits against the wall of a dark room, on the floor. She’s counting backward from 100, again, trying to calm her panicked breaths. When she woke up in this dark, cold room, she cried for awhile. She remembers Mommy laying on the floor, bleeding from more than one place, and it scares her to think she might be gone. But then she hears Maze’s voice, and it’s a refrain she said over and over when she showed Trixie how to fight. Fear is useless, kid. Fear is a tool your enemy will use. So she counts, and she calms herself. She has to be ready. She hasn’t seen them, but she can hear the TV on outside the door. She got up and explored the small room earlier. A bed, a small bathroom, no windows. Not much else. She couldn’t find a light. Then she’d panicked again and she sat on the floor and counted, repeating Maze’s words as she did it. Fear is a tool your enemy will use. When they came into her room, she’d forgotten about all the things Maze had taught her. She’d been tired and scared, and they were hurting Mommy. She’ll be ready next time, she promises herself. Her parents are both cops and a demon trained her in self-defense. The Devil has told her she’s clever. She misses Lucifer, and wonders if this would have happened if he were still here. Trixie pushes it aside, because Maze has a lot to say about wasting important energy on things you can’t control. She breathes in and she breathes out, and she waits for her chance. Fear is a tool your enemy will use. She knows bad people like to use kids to hurt the people that care about them, and she’s not going to let them use her to hurt anyone else. Please, Mommy, be okay, she thinks. Fear is a tool your enemy will use.

**

Lucifer wakes to find Chloe watching him intently through her eyelashes. Their foreheads are still touching, hands joined between them. He feels his lips curve into a half smile. “Hello,” he says softly. Her toes are touching his shins. She wiggles them against them when he speaks.

“Hi,” she says back. She breathes and just . . . takes him in. He finds himself doing the same. Everything between them has always been so urgent and rushed, a continuous parade of interrupted moments. In the middle of the chaos that is their current situation, it seems necessary to just be in this moment. Her grey-blue eyes hold his, and neither of them move a muscle. They just breath and gaze at one another in the soft light of his bedroom—a room he’s had countless sexual encounters in—and Lucifer thinks it may be the most erotic thing he’s ever done. He wants to kiss her, but he knows that they don’t have the time to spend on the kind of kiss that this moment deserves, so he won’t kiss her at all.

“How are you feeling?” He asks, intentionally breaking the moment because he’s either going to
reach for her or implode, and neither will do.

She rolls back and stretches, making a languid sound that does nothing to help his growing erection. Her hair, contained to a bun when she fell asleep, spreads loose and unruly across her (his) pillow. He wants to touch it and feels himself tighten even more. “So much better,” she says, voice sleepy and sexy (and he wants her, now, tomorrow, forever). “Like I can actually stand up and walk across the room and take a much needed shower without finding myself on the floor.”

“Hallelujah,” he says softly. It should be ironic, but it isn’t. If he’s ever wanted to worship something, it is her.

She laughs and rolls back to face him. Bloody hell if she doesn’t hook her leg over his, just a little. It doesn’t help his current situation in the least. “Lucifer?”

He just raises an eyebrow and looks at her mouth, waiting.

“You have to go back, don’t you?”

And hello, that’s a surefire way to defuse the building problem in his groin. He meets her eyes. He doesn’t want to speak of it, because it makes it real. Yet there is only one answer that he can live with, and if anything, his return has solidified his resolve even more. “I do,” he says gently, filled with regret. “I can’t see any other way. I wish I could, but it just isn’t there.”

She nods, eyes searching his. “Can you promise me something?”

The sun, the moon, the stars, his heart, his immortal soul, he thinks, they are already all hers. “Go on,” he says instead.

“Can you promise me you won’t go as soon as we find Trixie? Can you stay, even for just a few days, so that—” she gestures between them. “So that we have a little time to figure this out?”

He smiles, and shifts to her mouth again. He wants nothing more than time to figure this out, explore it, explore her. “You have my word,” he says, “for a day or two, at the very least.”

She nods, tightens her hold with the foot hooked over his leg and brings a hand up to run through his hair before scratching her nails softly down the side of his face and through his stubble. It’s new and unexpected and bloody hell, bullocks, she has no idea what she does to him when she touches him like that. He’s restored to his previous state of ridiculous arousal instantly and by a factor of five. “That’s good,” she says, “because if you have to leave again, I at least want you to undress me and have it mean something before you go.” His breath leaves him and he is watching her mouth again, every ounce of blood in his body rushing decidedly south to add to his already ridiculous problem. She isn’t even close to done though. Her words are soft and breathy and come quicker. “I want to wake up with you like this, and spend the time kissing you that you deserve, without some impending crisis that requires our attention. I want to take a shower with you, and eat with you, and just be with you, so that I have a little something more to hold on to than I had this past year.”

“Chloe,” he groans out, and it takes everything in his not to reach for her. If he reaches for her though, there’s no way he will be able to contain the nearly overwhelming desire to pull her to him, to kiss her, to draw a soft moan from her, and they absolutely really don’t have time for that. He will not rush with her, so he can not allow himself to touch her.

She smiles, then, and rolls back. “We probably should get up.”

He laughs at the irony and mirrors her motion, terribly thankful for the break in the ridiculous sexual tension. “Mission accomplished!”
She sits up, looks at him with a puzzled face before realization dawns. Her eyes twinkle as she bites her lip, adorable little lines appearing around her eyes as she considers him. Her hair is a mess of blonde chaos, and she’s undoubtedly the most beautiful woman he’s ever seen. “I’m going to go shower,” she says. She climbs out of bed, stretches and makes that damn sound again, (not helping at all, Detective) and walks to the bathroom. He’s pleased to see that she is finally able to stand and walk under her own power. She’s still wearing his dress shirt and it leaves him with a tantalizing view of her legs that does nothing to get his raging erection under control.

She pauses at the door and turns back to blow him a kiss. “You little minx!” He accuses, “you’re bloody well enjoying this, aren’t you?”

She laughs as she passes through the door and closes it behind her. It’s musical and magical and he tries to memorize the sound. That it can exist in this moment, with all the hurt and pain that they have endured, with Beatrice in harm’s way, is a miracle. He thinks of all the song lyrics dedicated to little moments, and knows why humans favor the topic so much. He tries not to think of her on the other side of the closed door, undoing the buttons he had so carefully secured the night before. They will be absolutely, Earth shatteringly amazing when they finally come together, he has no doubt. But right now he needs to get his ridiculously aroused body under control, because there is work to be done.

**

Lucifer dresses in his typical finery, then leaves the bedroom to find Maze and Dan asleep, sprawled on the sectional. Dan is stretched out on the chaise, his feet hanging charmingly off the end. Maze has her head in his lap. They’ve been busy, he sees. The white board has been transformed by mugshots of all the key players. There’s information about each of them, compiled and printed from their rap sheets. Dan and Maze have added a map, and twelve different photos of properties surround it, and line showing each properties actual location in LA. As he surveys each one, he finds a criteria list posted in the corner. They narrowed down the properties to ones indirectly linked to Teirning that were vacant, remote, and either warehouse or residential. “Well done,” Lucifer says to the sleeping forms on the couch.

He reaches for the coffee pot stored under the bar and brews a full pot for his crime-fighting team. Then he fetches his phone from the charger and dials his go-to breakfast joint. It’s not yet five in the morning, but one of the true glories of LA is that there’s always food available, and they always deliver. He orders too much food and pays extra for rush delivery. Now that he’s rested, his stomach reminds him that he hasn’t eaten since Charlie was kidnapped shortly after his birth. There’s no food in hell, nor a need for it. Lucifer doesn’t really even need to eat to survive, but food is a decadent pleasure, especially since he’s gone so long without it.

As the coffee finishes, the Detective comes down the stairs, looking clean and refreshed and sadly too clothed. He drinks in the sight of her, and pours her a cup of coffee. Maze has made sure the small mini-fridge has almond milk, and he prepares it just as she likes it. She stops at the white board and looks at the progress, arms crossed. He brings her the coffee with a flourish.

“Uh, caffeine! Lucifer, you really are an angel.” She nudges him with her hip, eyes never leaving the board.

“You’re in rare form today,” he says with a smile. He can’t believe she’s in such good spirits, given the situation.

She looks at him, reaching her free hand and placing it on his forearm. “I’m just glad you’re here, and ready to get Trixie back,” she says, hopeful. “It’s nice not to have the angel-feather-induced exhaustion hanging over me, too.”
“Right, so what’s our plan?” He asks, motioning to the board.

She looks at the properties on the map. She reaches for a marker, puts a dot for the penthouse, and puts another for the prison Teirning is being held at. “These three are, more or less, on the way to LAC,” she says. “I think we should leave now and try and clear them on our way there. The sooner we find her, the better off we are.”

He nods. “Once Dan meets Teirning’s demands . . .”

“Ochoa can help us clear the rest, if needed,” she says. “It’s really process of elimination.” She reads the summaries for the three men that broke into her apartment. “No surprise on their priors. Armed robbery, assault, drug charges, B&E. Not much of use there.” She taps Dead Eyes, nee Devin Rancor. “No next of kin, no real family ties. He’s ex-military. Looks like he’s a true operator.” Next she turns her eyes to Enrique Villalobos, aka Broken Nose. “Lorenzo, though, he’s got a wife and a kid.” She takes the marker and adds another dot. It’s within 30 minutes of a property just west of LAC. “After we talk to Teirning, we go here next.” Watching her work is always thrilling—she’s good at what she does, systematic and thorough. She walks to the bar, where Maze has relocated the two firearms she had brought for Chloe. She checks each one, loads it. The larger gun goes into the back of her jeans, the smaller goes into the provided ankle holster. As Chloe finishes arming herself, the elevator dings, heralding the arrival of breakfast.

They eat at the bar. Chloe tells him about Trixie and middle school between bites. “It’s close to the apartment, but it’s so much bigger than her old school. She changes classes every hour. She’s taking art every day, which she loves. And science is her favorite. She’s changed so much Lucifer, you won’t believe it. I can barely believe it.” He’s surprised that this new information burns in his chest. Time keeps going here, when he’s gone. Slower than in hell, yes, but it’s also a much less infinite time, especially for those he knows and loves. He swallows back the thought.

Dan and Maze wake up, pour themselves coffee and join them. Maze talks about Charlie and fills Lucifer in on the more interesting bounties she’s pursued in his absence. Dan mostly stays quiet, watching the familiarity in the group. When Trixie becomes the topic again, Dan adds to Maze and Chloe’s stories of mischief. Lucifer has nothing to share—his time away has been spent keeping order. There is no progress, no softness, no joy. The dichotomy burns.

When the food is gone, it’s time to go. Chloe updates Dan and Maze on their plans. Dan and Maze pick three properties in close proximity to the precinct to clear before heading in to fulfill Teirning’s demands, or at least go through the motions. They decide that Dan will plant the ring and the files, then will return to the precinct to catch Ochoa up to speed while Maze watches the drop point for the key. “Alright,” Chloe says, nodding. “Let’s do this. Let’s get Trixie home.”

In the garage, the corvette waits, top down. Lucifer is positively gleeful as he sits behind the wheel. “Hello, old friend,” he says, touching the wheel. He closes his eyes as he turns the key and the engine purrs to life. Radio on, he pulls out and onto the streets of LA.

**

The first light of dawn is gracing the eastern sky as they pull on to the interstate. Lucifer soaks in the fresh air and melodies floating from the radio. He’s missed music so very much. He and the Detective have talked through how they will approach Teirning. Now they have nothing but time—at least half an hour before they reach the first property, depending on traffic.

“You can ask me anything,” he says to the Detective.
"Anything?"

"I don't lie," he says.

"I assume there's a story behind that? And if I'm being honest, Lucifer, I still don't understand why you broke Julian's back. It's like the thing that started everything, you know?" His breath catches, and she's quick to backtrack. "I'm not blaming you, I just want to understand."

"That's a loaded question, Detective. That particular act, I supposed, links directly to the identity crisis you had the distinct pleasure of witnessing, front and center, for the majority of our partnership. You know," Lucifer said, shifting his eyes to her briefly, "when I first cut my wings off, after I decided to stay in Los Angeles, I did it to defy my Father. I was always accused of being the rebel, so I felt it was time to live up to who I was. I think my entire time here has been trying to find who I am. Little bits here and there. Took altogether too long really, but then I suppose since it took eons to get so bloody tangled up in the first place, ten years of self discovery is a drop in the bucket. Breaking Julian's back was my final low, I think. I felt like I was losing the more human parts of me, and I blamed myself entirely for Joan's death." He swallows, thinking of the officer who was killed when Julian got away. "It was at its worst then, struggling with who I was, how others see me as, how history sees me as. A punisher, yes, but also violent, terrifying. In that moment, I felt I was being myself, the rebel, beyond law or the command of God." He realizes he isn't making much sense, but she seems to understand the root of his crisis.

"So it all traces back to the Fall," she said softly. "Capital F."

"Indeed." Daddy issues, anyone?

"What happened?" She backtracked quickly. "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to. . . ."

He exhales. The Fall shaped him, he understands that quite well at this point. He wants to, needs to, share that with her. "No, no I think it's time," he says. The music plays, the warm air caressing them as the fly down the interstate. Her hair blows, wild and free, when he glances at her. "You see, my Father wanted me to tempt humanity. The way it's written in the Bible, that's what he wanted me to be. The Devil on your shoulder telling you to do your worst, and then punishing you for what you do. It's all over the bloody scripture. John 8:44 says, 'You belong to your father, the Devil, and you carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and a father of lies.' Had John write that down long after I was cast down, he did. I suppose when I didn't live up to his desires, his edicts, he simply wrote history to tell the version of the story he wanted."

Chloe reaches for him, takes his hand and twines their fingers together. "So you don't lie."

He nods. "A point of pride," he says, his token phrase. "My continuous rebellion against what Father wanted me to be. He wanted me to lie, and then punish for following the lies. But if it's in the Good Book, it must be true, right? I simply didn't want to be those things, so I refused his edict and he cast me out." He thinks of the time he was able to spend with his mum and revises. "Actually, Father wanted to destroy me." How ridiculous that after all of this time and all that has happened, it still hurts him, makes him burn, to say those words out loud. "It was my mum who talked Him into casting me out, instead. You see, it was unheard of not to do as Father asked. His word was the Law, capital L. Lots of that, by the way, in case you were wondering." He sees her shake her head out of the corner of his eye. "He quite literally opened a hole in the floor of Heaven and pushed me through, bound my wings so I couldn't fly, barred the gates against me on my way out. Like I'd ever want to go back." Heaven was in so many ways like Hell, a loop on repeat, an orchestration to be followed, unchanging and just downright boring.
Chloe squeezes his hand.

Dawn stretches across the horizon, and when he glances at her, she looks nearly luminescent. He continues, and it says a great deal about the progress they have made that he doubts anything he says now will turn her away from him. He trusts her completely with every one of secrets. “My devil face, the visage you saw when I was unable to control myself—minus the wings, of course; I still had mine but they were damaged and useless for a time—that was what I looked like after the Fall. My descent, so to speak, into the plane of Hell burned my skin, left me scarred until it healed.”

She sucks in a breath, tightens her grip on him. “It must have been terribly painful.”

That memory, unlike so many of the other sensory memories that fade, remains vivid and clear. “It was long ago,” he said, “but yes. Humans think of hell as being an underworld, and it is in terms of what you find there, but it really lies on its own cosmic plane. The cosmos flayed every inch of skin from my body on my way there. It was excruciating.” He thinks about his Devil form, and how it disappeared when his wings came back. “If Amenadiel is right about celestials choosing our form, and I believe that he is, I probably kept that form because I thought I deserved it. When my skin healed, I was able to be as you see me now, but I retained the scarred form of my fall. For a long time in Hell, it was the only way I allowed myself to be seen. It was rather useful, to be seen as the monster. It showed the demons how I strong I was, to survive that and stand before them. But with all that has happened, I think I kept it as a punishment—as a reminder of the punishment I thought I deserved for not being the loyal son.”

“You didn’t.” She says it with such conviction, it takes his breath away. “It'd be like me telling Trixie to go pull the legs of spiders, and then dragging her behind me car because she wouldn’t.” She sounds disgusted. “Ridiculous.”

“Detective . . .”

“No, I am serious Lucifer. Human children rebel all the time, and for a lot less. I don’t care if your dad is God, you would think the same rules of parenting would apply.” She is angry now. She turns to look across her window, and he watches as she wipes her hand at her eyes. Is she crying for him?

“So you see, I spent so much time, especially since you came into my life, trying to sort out who I was,” he said softly. “I thought I knew, before Delilah. Rebel first. It never occurred to me that I could be anything else.” Not until she saw him as a man, and treated him like he was more than just what he could do for her. No one had ever wanted him, they had wanted only what he could do—sex or favors or protection or punishment.

“You were an angel first,” she says with absolute conviction.

He nods. “I think that’s why I struggled so. It’s like trying to find yourself while denying who you are at your core.”

A silence stretches before them, and Lucifer sinks into the music playing from the radio until either of them is ready to talk again.

When she speaks again, it’s careful and a little sad. “I don’t think I can ever put into words the injustice I did to you, running to Rome and seeking help from Father Kinley.”

“Detective . . .“

“No, please,” she says, squeezing his hand again. “Let me say this, because it has absolutely haunted me for the last year, Lucifer. Longer, maybe.” He hears her take a big breath. “Right
before Charlotte died, you remember, on the balcony?"

He sees the memory, had replayed it a thousand times whilst he was in Hell. “I know the memory you speak of,” he says carefully.

“You told me you were worried that I would run, if I saw your monstrous side and that you were the Devil. And I said you weren’t. But then I saw, really saw, that you actually were, and I ran, just like you said I would.” There is regret in her words.

“Yes, I know all of this,” he says. The memory of it still hurts. She’d stayed gone a long time, and lied when she came back. He’s forgiven her, but it still stings.

“It didn’t occur to me that you were struggling so much with finding yourself. It made sense to me that the evil part, because like you said, everything says the Devil is evil, was separate from the you. Because the real reason I ran was because I was already in love with you, even then, and there was no way that I would love the Devil. So you had to be separate, you know? And I was all sorts of confused anyway, because if you were the Devil then I also nearly married the world's first fucking murderer. I mean, I slept with him, Lucifer. I am usually such a good judge of character, and he was a murderer, and a liar, and so many things I couldn’t even begin to process.”

He realizes that maybe squeezing the steering wheel a bit tighter than he should, but doesn't interrupt her.

“Everything that happened with Marcus, I realized that I fell so quick into that because he seemed to be all the things you aren’t.”

“Yes, I puzzled that bit out myself.” Because he knows it’s hard for her to talk about these things, he lightens her burden for a moment by regaling her with the story of him as the Detective and Daniel as Lucifer as they solved a doggy-napping murder. “I couldn’t make sense of why you chose Cain, not until I looked closely at my own behavior. Then the truth of it was pretty hard to deny.”

“It’s always been you though,” she said, soft and a little sad again. “It’s always been you for me, too. But at the time, I was so confused and it was all so complicated. I am a simple person, and there was nothing simple about any of it. Angels, demons, immortals and the Devil. I think Kinley, and the way I treated you after, the way I tried to change you, that was a bit of my identity crisis. And I didn’t even consider that the history books are written by the victor, and that the research I did might not even begin to tell the whole story.” Her words are coming fast and hard, like they’ve been pent up for a long while (and he guesses that they have, an entire year, perhaps). “I’m sorry I didn’t see you, the real you, all the way through like I should have. Even when I knew it was wrong to do what Kinley wanted, I still tried to change you. That trip to the soup kitchen was maybe the most ridiculous thing I could have come up with. You aren’t something that needs fixed, you’re you. You’re good, Lucifer, through and through. More than a little broken, but good. An angel first, a rebel second, and the Devil. But also, just Lucifer Morningstar, my partner. I don’t know how I ever lost sight of the fact that you always have my back. I should have had yours, too.”

He takes a moment to meet her eyes. “Thank you,” he says. “That actually does help. It's already forgiven, but it helps.” He surprised that what she’s said has made her actions make more sense to him, beyond his typical self-flagellating of course she ran, how could she not?

A comfortable silence stretches between them, music wrapping them in comfort. Soon, Lucifer exits the freeway, and within 10 minutes they are at their first property. The sun has fully risen, but the buildings in the area leave long shadows on the street. It’s a five-story apartment building owned by one of Teirning’s shell corporations. The properties surrounding it are also abandoned. Chloe hands him a flashlight, and it's time to get down to the task at hand. “We go in, quick and quiet, and we
clear all the rooms. There’s a lot of them, so we need to work fast.”

“I don’t need this,” Lucifer said, gesturing with the flashlight, grinning.

“Take it anyway,” Chloe says. Lucifer glances at the decrepit neighborhood around them and hopes the Corvette will remain unaccosted in their absence.

They enter quietly and start in the basement. They move systematically, room by room. They find a homeless man, but he shakes his head at the pictures Chloe shows him. Rats skitter away from them on the second floor. The layer of dust on the third makes it clear no one has been here in a long time. Half an hour later they leave the smell of mildew behind. Lucifer grimaces as they climb into the car, which is thankfully whole, and makes a note to have his detailer stop by when they’ve found the spawn.

They drive through city streets to reach their next spot. Google declares they will arrive in 20 minutes.

Lucifer glances at the Detective and weighs the benefits of continuing their discussion compared to waiting until a later time. In the end, his mind is made up by the distinct lack of time they seem to have. “Can you handle more of the things that have been waiting so long to be said?” Lucifer asks as they make a left turn onto Lantana.

“Yeah,” the Detective says, considering. Around them, shops are being opened to begin the day. “After all the time apart, I’d rather it said then unsaid.”

“All above-board then,” he says. “Right before you were poisoned, I found out an odd piece of information that I was going to share.” He's waited to long to tell her this.

“Until I was, well, incapacitated and you ran off and married a blonde bimbo?”

Lucifer purses his lips and lets the defamation of Candy’s character slide for now. He has no doubt that the Detective would actually like Candy’s true personality. “I found out, through machinations of my mum . . .”

“Charlotte Richards, but not,” The Detective says.

“Right. For the period between investigating the disappearance of Charlotte, and the incident on the pier, Charlotte was possessed by my mum.”

“Your mom. Possessed.” She says, a little faintly.

“Right. She’s the Goddess of all creation, I suppose. You’ll note dear old Dad left her out of most of the religious texts.”

“Lucifer, I hate to tell you this, but the more I learn about your dad, the less I like him.” She is vehement on the last bit, and it buoys his heart.

“Good, Detective, I’d be rather worried about your sanity otherwise.” He smiles at her. She’s doing rather well with this mountain of information so far. Now for the worrisome part. “So it turns out, your parents had trouble conceiving.”

“Um,” she says snapping her head to look at him. “And you know this . . . how?”

“Well, Amenadiel told me. It turns out dear old Dad sent him to bless your parents. You are a Miracle, capital M.”
She turns fully toward him, now. “What the hell does that even mean, Lucifer?”

“And isn’t that just the right question, Detective.” He stops at a light, takes advantage of the opportunity to turn and face her. “I still don’t know the answer. And my Father, he’s no help. He never explains anything. For while, I thought it meant that you were put in my path—one of his manipulations.”


Oh, right. Traffic, driving. “But that was when I thought everything was one of his manipulations—my wings, my devil face. I thought it explained my vulnerability to you, although I think I may have another explanation for that now.”

“Wait, what?” She says. “Lucifer, I can’t keep up. What other explanation?”

He sighs. “If everything, my Devil form, my wings, are self-determined, maybe my vulnerability is, too.”

“Explain, please,” she says. She runs her fingers over the dashboard, a sign he takes to mean this is a lot to deal with.

“I think a part of me never wanted you to really know the truth. I think perhaps it’s why my Devil face disappeared when it did. I needed it back to punish Cain, not to mention I broke some rather important rules by killing a human, even a tampered with one.”

He turns the car again, and they have clearly left the "good" part of the area.

“Lucifer, focus. You’ve got a lot of threads running and I can barely keep up.”

“I think once I started caring for you, I didn’t want you to see what I was. I think I always assumed you’d run when you found out and wouldn’t come back. So maybe, just maybe, my vulnerability is self-determined, too. It’s also a literal manifestation of the greatest truth there is. You are my weakness, Detective. Anything that hurts you, hurts me. The thing that terrifies me most is something happening to you.”

“Oh,” she says. “That goes both ways, you know.”

He hates that, in a way. He shouldn’t be that important to her. She should have only goodness and light, not be pining after the Devil who has a commitment to Hell. “It’s frightening, really. I have many enemies, and I abhor the thought of anyone trying to harm you to get to me.”

Chloe sighs, and it reminds him of the way she sounds when she’s explaining something complicated to the offspring. “You don’t have a corner on that market, you know. Look at our current situation as exhibit one. Trixie is being used as leverage to get Dan to do what Teirning wants. Trixie was used as leverage to get me to do what Malcolm wanted.”

Lucifer considers this. “Both my fault,” he says.

She doesn’t react well to this. “What the hell do you mean by that? You didn’t make Malcolm take Trixie, or Dan get himself involved with Teirning. Now you sound like the religious zealots. ‘The Devil made me do it.’”

“No, no, I just mean that I set things in motion by breaking Julian’s back. And Malcolm was only alive because Amenadiel brought him back from Hell to kill me.”
“I’m sorry, what?” Chloe’s yelling now and turned fully in her seat to face him again. “We’re completely off the original topic, but what?”

Oops, Lucifer thinks. He thinks of the most concise way to tell this rather long, complicated story that she only knows half of. “Are you sure you want to know this? Can handle it?”

“Yes,” she says, sounding tired. “Just please, explain.”

“My trips to the mortal realm have been happening for a long time.”

“I know that much,” she says. When he raises an eyebrow she clarifies, “Kinley showed me a book that had pictures of you throughout history. He tried to blame every bad event that ever happened on you. It was ridiculous.”

“Well at least you could see through that charade,” he says. “Anyway, sometimes I went back to Hell on my own, but often Father would send Amenadiel to bring me back. Amenadiel has changed a great deal—he used to be an insufferable bore who loved to be dear old Dad’s favorite tool. I refused to go, and subverted all of Amenadiel’s attempts to send me back. He found out you made me vulnerable, so he decided to save Malcolm from Hell and task him with sending me back.”

“And he did that . . . how?” Chloe asks. They are pulling up to their second property.

He turns to her. “When Malcolm died, he simply flew down to hell and brought his soul back. Plopped it right back in his body before anyone was the wiser.”

“Like demonic possession works,” she said, clearly thinking back to the disaster before he left.

Lucifer shrugs. “More or less. Now, shall we?” He indicates to the warehouse.

Chloe leans back, groaning as she glances at her watch. “It isn’t even eight in the morning, Lucifer. This is a lot.”

He snorts. “Darling, this isn’t even half of it.”

He laughs as she grumbles, slamming the poor Corvette’s door a bit too hard.

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They clear the warehouse and another nearby apartment building. Dan texts that he and Maze have already cleared two other properties. Five down, seven to go. Maze is going to clear a third, while Dan heads to the precinct to put the next part of the plan in motion.

Lucifer waits until they are finally headed to the prison to continue talking about Chloe’s Miracle status. He’s given her some time to digest everything he’s told her. She’s been quiet, but when he looks at her, she meets his eyes and smiles. Sometimes she’ll reach out and touch him. He contents himself with listening to the music, humming along or occasionally singing. But he’s waited a long time to have this conversation with her, and he doesn’t want to table it until after they’ve talked with Teirming, lest he loses his nerve.

“So, before our detour into Malcolm and my vulnerability . . . “ he begins.

“Amenadiel blessed my mother.” They are back on the interstate again.

“Yes. I was worried that this meant you had no choice in your feelings for me.”

She laughs, without humor. “Is that why you disappeared?”
“Partially, yes.” He isn’t ready to tackle the rest of that, with the limited amount of time they have until they reach LAC. He would also very much like to look her in the face for that conversation. “There’s more to that, but if we can table it until later, because it will take a lot of time and I will most certainly break your brain for the day.”

“Fine.”

“Candy was convenient to convince my mum I didn’t care about you, because she directly threatened to use you to get what she wanted from me. Candy also allowed me to give you some distance, because I hated the idea of you not having a choice where I am concerned. Free will is so very important, you see.”

“You could have just asked,” she bit out.

“And you would have just believed me and answered,” he deadpans. He takes her silence as acquiescence. “It was the fact that you made me vulnerable that brought Cain to L.A. He wanted to die, and he had been marked by Amenadiel for immortality.” Lucifer taps his arm.

“Amenadiel sure is a busy guy,” Chloe says. “Who knew?”

“He pursued you because he thought you could remove the mark, as you removed my own immortality.”

“And you let him,” she said, and he can’t miss the hurt that laces her voice.

“I saw a lot of myself in him, Detective. I had no idea how depraved he was, not really. I saw him as a kindred spirit—someone my father had maligned and manipulated. I think Cain lost his mark when he walked away from you—he was willing to give up what he wanted to keep from hurting you.”

She snorted. “He hurt me anyway.”

“I know,” Lucifer says softly. “I’m sorry for all of that.”

He watches her shrug. “Aren’t we both. So I’m a Miracle, capital M, maybe put here to stop you, or help you, or nothing to do with you at all, and apparently I’m a beacon for immortals who are having existential crises, who are too busy dealing with their own mess to think about their impact on others. Did I miss anything?”

Lucifer huffs, and shakes his head. “No, that pretty much sums it up.” She’s resilient and strong and blunt and he loves her unconditionally.

They arrive at LAC, and she is out of the car as soon as it comes to a stop. “Bullocks,” he mutters, throwing the car into park and hurrying after her. “Detective,” he calls, reaching to touch her shoulder. She turns to face him. Her eyes are a maze of pain and worry, but he sees the compassion there too, and the soft, indefinable thing he is finally recognizing as love. No one but her looks at him with that in their eyes. Lust, desire, want, but never love. “I know it’s a lot,” he says softly. “But I don’t want there to be anymore secrets between us.”

She swallows and nods. She reaches for his hand. “No more secrets, or regrets, or things left unsaid.”

He cups her cheek, and then they get to the business at hand.
Everything

Chapter Summary

Even in his orange jumpsuit, Teirning looks as smug and pompous as ever. Lucifer walks in, smiles at him. “Hello, Mr. Teirning.”

“Why, Mr. Morningstar, what an unexpected surprise,” Teirning says, a false smile on his face. “Broken any backs lately?”

“You’ve taken something that doesn’t belong to you,” Lucifer says carefully.

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Going to go ahead and update this tonight. Next chapter will probably be up Friday, and then only one more to go.

Lucifer plays Lifehouse, Everything, on the piano: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyXYCdqyxbs (or an excellent cover with lyrics by tronius https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-p5KeQlzRw – it’s a keyboard so not perfectly Lucifer, but the dude has an AMAZING VOICE)

Yeah, it’s so saccharine towards the end, sorry/not sorry. Mature for a reason, so please heed the rating. The lyrics aren’t mine, nor are the characters.

They’ve arranged to meet with Teirning in a private interview room. He’s already there when they arrive. Lucifer enters first, the Detective waiting outside. He wants to see his reaction to her being alive—this will give them a read on what he was hoping for and what he knows, before Lucifer pulls it out of him.

Even in his orange jumpsuit, Teirning looks as smug and pompous as ever. Lucifer walks in, smiles at him. “Hello, Mr. Teirning.”

“Why, Mr. Morningstar, what an unexpected surprise,” Teirning says, a false smile on his face. “Broken any backs lately?”

Lucifer smiles his Devil smile, the one he is aware looks unnatural includes all too many teeth, as he sits in the chair across from Teirning. He makes a show of crossing his leg, smoothing the wrinkles from his suit, and straightening his cuffs. “No, my punishments have been a bit more, shall we say, divinely sanctioned of late. Tell me, Mr. Teirning, what have you been up to, since last we met? Killed anymore drug dealers for crimes they didn’t commit?”

“What do you want?” Teirning leans forward, tents his hands on the table.

“You’ve taken something that doesn’t belong to you,” Lucifer says carefully. He and the Detective have discussed this. They must be very careful to pry at Teirning without angering him, lest he take it out of the child.

Teirning shakes his head. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

The Detective comes in then, and Lucifer watches and Teirning’s condescending sneer slips. His face falters, and then he curls his lip in an angry snarl. *Bullocks.* He put a hit on her, her near-death
was not a by-product of the spawn’s kidnapping, but one of the purposes of the intrusion.

“Detective Decker,” Teirning says, recovering.

“Where’s my daughter, Teirning?” Chloe demands without preamble, sitting across from him.

“Ah so that’s who you’re looking for,” he says to Lucifer, feigning interest. He turns to the Detective, his smug façade back in place. “As I was just telling your upstanding partner here, I have no idea,” he says, sarcasm dripping. “Have you lost her? You should really be more careful with something so valuable Detective Decker. Our children are the future.”

The Detective crosses her arms, and Lucifer can see from the subtle change in her body language that she is already past done with Teirning. “Yes, and you’ve done such a fantastic job raising yours to be an upstanding member of society. Like father, like son.”

Teirning just stares at the Detective, and Lucifer watches the man focus on the slight bruising around the detective’s eye and nose. He watches the man’s jaw work as he looks her over and can see no other damage. Even though he works hard to hide it, Lucifer can see the annoyance there, and also the confusion. He is ready to be done with this charade, so Lucifer tilts his head at the man. “It would seem, Mr. Teirning, that your men have misinformed you, no?” Teirning purses his lips, but says nothing. “I guess that’s what happens when you don’t do things yourself, they don’t go as planned. Too bad you’re caged, like the monster you are.” He leans closer, locks eyes with the cretin across from him. Enough games, it is time to figure out what is driving this repulsive man, who uses innocents as pawns. “Tell me, Mr. Teirning, what is it you desire?”

Teirning’s face goes from confused to out of focus to angry in a matter of seconds. “I want to be out of this place. I want to kill Julian myself, because it’s his fault I ended up here.” Without breaking the focus he has on Teirning, Lucifer senses more than sees the Detective lean back, surprised by his vehemence. “I want to wipe that pretty partner of yours off the planet,” he stays, glaring at the Detective, and Lucifer feels his lip curl into a snarl. Teirning is still not done, continuing, “and make you pay too. You should have stayed under whatever rock you crawled under for this last year. You need to be gone, so that I can go back to the lovely, easy life I had.”

Lucifer leans back. “Well, aren’t you just Dad of the Year!” He mocks, working hard to cover the shift of fear at the threat against the Detective. Jacob Teirning is desperate for his freedom at all costs, and is far more deadly than even Lucifer had anticipated. He lusts for the murder of his own son, and Lucifer has first-hand knowledge that those who consider filicide, and he knows now that there is nothing Teirning will not do to get what he wants. Fear and love are the two strongest weaknesses that can be used against someone, and it seems Teirning is only worried about himself. Lucifer thinks his next words through carefully. “Let me tell you something, Mr. Teirning,” he says, low and dangerous. “I happen to know a thing or two about self-centered egomaniacs such as yourself. You’re willing to hurt anyone to get what you want. You care for no one but yourself, but you should know something.” Lucifer leans forward. He thinks that if this were any other case, the Detective would say his name, or place a hand on him to calm him. But Beatrice’s life hangs in the balance, so instead the Detective stands, moving toward the door to give him space. “If anything happens to the child, or the Detective for that matter,” he says in a growl, and he lets the fire burn in his eyes, “there will be nowhere you can go that will be safe from me.” His voice lowers, deadly. “No matter how far you run, I will find you. And when your life is over, well, that’s when the fun will really begin.” He lets his face flash, watches as Teirning jumps back. “I will flay the skin from you until you look like me, and then when you heal I will do it again and again. We would have an eternity to spend in retribution for your crimes.” Teirning does not scream or look away though, and Lucifer thinks again that they have underestimated him greatly.
He pushes back and follows the Detective out the door without sparing Teirning a backward glance. They move quickly and quietly back to the Corvette. Lucifer climbs into the passenger seat and puts his hands on the wheel, not starting the car. “Did we just make this worse?” The Detective asks carefully, sounding very worried.

“I don’t know,” he says, and hates the answer. “We have underestimated him.”

“I’ve never seen anyone so full of hate,” she whispers. “To threaten to kill his own son . . .” She trails off.

“Yes, sad to say I know the type. We need to block his communication to the outside. He knows you’re alive, and I’m absolutely certain he’ll try again. I also don’t know what that knowledge does to the plans he has for Dan.”

“He wants to kill his own son,” she says, disgusted. “He won’t bat an eye at killing Trixie. I should have stayed behind, like you asked. At least then he would still have thought I was dead. Now, I think he feels cornered and desperate. With you and I both back in the picture, he’s further from his goal of absolution than ever.” Chloe purses her lips, then nods, as if she’s agreeing with whatever it is she’s been considering. “It’s time to bring Ochoa in, and fast. He can work the prison angle. We need to find Trixie. I think we’re out of time,” she says, swallowing.

Lucifer starts the car, peels out of the parking lot and guns it as soon as they hit the main stretch. The Detective picks up her phone and calls Detective Espinoza. As soon as she hangs up, she fills him in. “Dan’s got the evidence. He’s following their demands and is about to take out a safety deposit box at the bank. He’s asking Ochoa for an immediate meet away from the precinct.”

They drive too fast, and the Detective doesn’t say a word. She’s wringing her hands. It’s been nearly eleven hours since Beatrice has been taken, Lucifer figures, and every passing hour makes things more serious. He hopes that the find something useful from Lorenzo’s wife or the property nearby. The proximity of those two seems more than coincidence. For all those times I was a pawn, Father, keep the child safe. A prayer to the Almighty, who like Teirning, didn’t care who was hurt so long as he got what he wanted. She doesn’t deserve to be used as you have used your children.

Soon they arrived in Lorenzo’s neighborhood. As Lucifer starts to pull into a spot across the street from his boring, pedestrian house, the Detective grabs his arm. “Lucifer, keep driving.”

“What is it?” He eases off the break and corrects his angle on the steering wheel.

“Lorenzo’s getting in his car,” the Detective says, as if she can’t believe their luck. She scoots down in the seat. “Gee, wouldn’t it be great if we were in something a little less conspicuous,” she says, but there is no real heat in his words.

“Well thank Dad, things are finally going our way, Detective. If he’s able to come and go this easily . . .”

“That property nearby has to be the place.” Lucifer guns the car. They’re fifteen minutes away from the property Dan and Maze had identified, but far less if he disregards traffic laws. “If we’re wrong, we have time to meet up with Dan.”

“And if we’re right, we can take them by surprise, and a man down.”

“Come on, come on,” the Detective urges. “Hang on, Monkey.”

It feels like an interminable amount of time before they pull up at the abandoned tenement building.
The entire area is abandoned, a mixture of closed shops and ugly, empty one stories waiting to be demolished a developer. Lucifer finds a blind corner and parks the car. Once again, the Detective is out of the car before he has it in park.

“Detective, wait,” he calls after her, rushing to catch up as he throws the car in park and vaults the closed door. “You aren’t going to like this, but . . .”

“Don’t you dare ask me to stay outside, Lucifer!” She says, drawing her gun from the waist of her pants.

“Wait, hear me out!” He catches her, matches her strides. “There’s three reasons for you to do just that.”

“Okay fine, talk fast.” She says, sliding along the edge of the building.

“One, this place isn’t that big. You can watch for them to make a run for it. We can’t let them get away with her. Two,” he says, hurrying along, lest she enter the building before he is done. “if you stay out here, I only have to worry about finding Beatrice and not about you being shot again. Three, if you stay out here, they can shoot at me all they want, and it won’t matter. I’m of much more use without you in there, and you will be here to make sure they don’t leave with her.”

The Detective stops, grits her teeth, and then groans. “Dammit, Lucifer. Fine, you’re right. Be careful.”

He hands her the keys, presses them into her hands. “Do not let them leave here with her,” he says, even though she knows.

She kisses him hard and fast. “Get my daughter back.” She doesn’t tell him to be safe, and he knows its because they both know he’s not going to get hurt unless she is there. He nods, and then he checks the door. It’s locked, but he’s the Devil.

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Something’s happening. There’s been a flourish of noise and voices in the past however-long it’s been. There are no windows, but Trixie has watched sun creep under the doorway, moving further into the room with the passage of time. One of the men left right before the sun came up, and he hasn’t been back. Recently, there was a flurry of voices, getting louder and more agitated as time passed. Trixie is hungry and stiff from sitting on the floor. She hasn’t slept since she woke up here the first time, for fear of being foggy when the time for action came. Something tells her it’s imminent now. She gets up, starts pacing.

“Hello, bad guys!” She hears a very familiar voice call. Lucifer! What is he doing here? There’s a scep of chairs and a flurry of motion.

The door flings open, and the mean looking burly guy levels a gun at her. “Get over here, now,” he commands. This is the man that shot Mommy, and she doesn’t doubt that he will shoot her. She does as she says, keeping her eyes open for the right opportunity. Fear is the tool your enemy will use. She channels Maze as the man pulls her in front of him, one arm around her neck and the gun pointed at her head. “Move, now,” he says. She keeps her breathing steady. She will not let her fear be used against her.

Trixie hears a scuffle outside, and then Lucifer, tall and here, fills the doorway, dressed in his fancy clothes. “Well, hello, Mr. Rancor. You have something there that doesn’t belong to you. Her mum would very much like her back, now.” Mommy. Lucifer’s been here for less than a minute and he’s
already let her know that her mom’s okay, that she’s alive and waiting for her. She feels tears of relief fill her eyes.

“Stay back, or I’ll shoot her,” her captor says. Lucifer locks eyes with her, gives her a half smile.

“You wouldn’t want to do that, Mr. Rancor. There really would be Hell to pay.” Lucifer tilts his head and holds the man’s gaze. He’s never scared her before, but in that moment he shows too many teeth and it’s the first time she’s ever thought he looks dangerous.

She clears her mind, like Maze taught her. She remembers curling up on the couch with Maze and her Mom and watching Ms. Congeniality. Just remember to SING. Maze had showed her how to do it, after. Trixie swings her elbow and slams it against his chest, right below his sternum. Solar plexus. She raises her foot and stomps and the short burly man’s foot. Instep. As he bends in surprise, loosening his hold on her, she turns and punches him in the face. Nose. He makes a grunt of surprise, completely releasing her. She kicks him hard in the nuts, just like Maze taught her. Groin. And then Trixie runs, not toward Lucifer but off to the side. She sees a desk and heads for the cover of it. She knows Lucifer, he’s saved her twice now, and she knows that he’ll draw her captor’s attention until he’s able to incapacitate him.

Lucifer lets out a shout of laughter. “Oh, come now, Mr. Rancor,” Lucifer taunts, “all that military training and you let a little girl get the best of you. Well done, Beatrice!” He calls out, sounding positively gleeful. She reaches the desk and ducks her head down. She hears gunshots, and as much as she wants to look or scream for Lucifer, she trusts. She’s seen him shot before, seen him walk away. She and Mommy are lucky to have a guardian Devil, especially with the way danger seems to always find them. She hears a man scream, the crunch of bone, the skitter of a weapon across the concrete floor. “Light’s out, Mr. Rancor,” smooth British accent, perfectly polite. The solid thump of what can only Lucifer’s fist hitting her captor in the face. She feels tears flood her eyes as she stands from her spot. He straightens, and she notices a red light fading as his eyes return to brown. Cool! It seems that Maze isn’t the only one with a few useful visual effects. The big, burly man who shot her mother lays at his feet, unconscious.

“Lucifer!” She cries, running toward him.

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Lucifer opens his arms as Beatrice collides with him. His heart constricts at her solid warmth against him. She has tears streaming down her face. For once, he doesn’t really care if she gets snot or tears on him. She’s alive and here and safe. “Is Mommy really okay?”

He squeezes her tightly against him. “Yes, she’s just outside. She’s fine.” He realizes, with surprise, how much she has changed. She’d come just to his hip when last he’d seen her, but now she’s nearly to his chest. Lucifer hears the wail of sirens in the distance, and then the Detective is there.

“Trixie!” She cries, and Lucifer releases Beatrice so that she can barrel into her mother. The Detective holds her daughter close, tears streaming down both their eyes. He pulls his phone from his pocket, snaps a picture of the two of them, and sends it Dan, Maze, and Linda. And then he just watches them. He lets the thing that is in his chest, raw and wonderful and full of light, breath and grow and he watches them comfort each other. He’s surprised when the both turn and wave to him. What’s this? He steps toward them, unsure. The Detective reaches out, grabs his hand, pulls him closer. The child wraps one arm around his waist and pulls him into their circle. He finds himself putting an arm around each of them and he holds on. This. This is what family, a real family is, he realizes. It’s foreign and strange and wonderful. He holds on to them, and them to him, and the thing in his chest consumes every inch of him. Love, family, belonging. After eons, he finally
knows, finally understands what he’s been searching for. His time in Hell, away from the Detective, her little imp, has stripped away all the worry and the doubt and the fear. He knows without a doubt that this is family, love, life, belonging. Home is Lux or even Los Angeles, it is Chloe and Beatrice, in his arms. All his pieces, broken for so long, seem to click together and make him whole.

**

Dan and Maze arrive while the Detective and Lucifer are giving their statements. Lucifer watches as the child runs and hugs them both with the same reckless abandon that she had him and her mum. The Detective finishes with the uniform, and comes over to stand with them. They stand in a circle, Demon, Devil, Miracle, Reformed Douche, and impish young lady (because she isn’t a child anymore, Lucifer realizes, and it makes him sad that he missed that). Lucifer recounts for them, down to the very last detail, how Beatrice single-handedly took a military-bad guy by surprise.

“I remembered **everything** you’ve ever taught me, Maze,” the child brags, grabbing both of Maze’s hands. “Remember when we watched Miss Congeniality and then we practiced over and over and over? I used that. But I used other things too, all the stuff you’ve taught me. Fear is a tool your enemy will use. Remember teaching me that, Maze? I didn’t let myself be afraid.” She might have changed while he was away, but Beatrice still bounces on her toes as she tells the story, voice shining with pride.

Maze pulls her close, holds her tight. “You did good, kid.” Lucifer can’t get over how much Mazikeen of the Lillim, Hell’s most disciplined torturer, has grown and changed.

“I think if you ever tire of hunting bounties,” he says, rye, “you could open a self defense studio. You all really should have seen it; she was quite brilliant.”

“Of course she was!” The Detective declares, running a hand over her daughter’s head. Daniel is on Beatrice’s other side and hugs her close to him yet again.

They pile into Detective Espinoza’s car. Lucifer starts to take the Corvette himself, but it’s Daniel who shakes his head and convinces him otherwise. “Have someone else drive it, Lucifer. They need you with them, too.” Belonging. He gives the keys to a responsible-looking uniform, along with a hundie, and asks that the car be delivered free from damage. Daniel tosses Maze the keys to his ridiculously pedestrian sedan, and then piles into the back with his ex-wife and daughter, the child sandwiched between them. Neither the Detective nor Daniel can seem to stop touching the child at every chance, as if they can hardly believe she is there.

“I am **starving,**” Trixie declares. They debate as they drive, and in the end opt for ordering tacos to be delivered to the penthouse. He meets the Detective’s eyes as they discuss dining options and he sees the lines of worry there. Until they know that any threat from Teirning is contained, he surmises, and he knows she will agree, it is best to keep appearances in the open to a minimum. He sees her shoulders sag in relief as he offers his place and to handle the details, unable to miss the way her hand wraps possessively around her daughter.

It takes time to get home in the traffic, but the security and familiarity of the place is welcome. The tacos are waiting when they arrive, warm and smelling wonderful, having been brought upstairs by one of the trusted staff from Lux. They all sit on the balcony, eating and watching the world continue on below them. The afternoon sun is warm and comforting, and an air of relaxation carries over them all after the chaos of the last 18 hours. Lucifer has shed his jacket and rolled up his sleeves, feeling casual and at home. The Detective floats around between him and Beatrice, touching them both any time she’s close enough.

Linda, Charlie and Amenadiel arrive as they are finishing lunch. The Doctor closes him in a tight
hug after passing the baby off to Amenadiel. “Lucifer, I’ve missed you.” He hugs her back, knows she is genuine.

“I think you’d be pretty proud of me, Doctor,” he says, smiling down at her, thinking of all the progress he has made both in Hell and at Home (his heaven, he thinks, and it’s time for Home to have a capital “H”).

She frames his face, standing on her tip-toes. “Oh, Lucifer, I already am,” she says with conviction. She looks past him for a moment and then nudges him conspiratorially. “Now, you have to see this,” she says, pointing as Amenadiel starts to set up the pack-and-play. “We’ve had this thing since Charlie was born, and now that he’s walking, he’s almost too big for it, but Amenadiel still can’t put it together in less that fifteen minutes.” She giggles. “It’s absolutely entertaining.” He tilts and watches as he sees exactly what Linda means. Amenadiel’s brow is wrinkled as he focuses on the task at hand, frequently pulling one side of the strange contraption before him down, only to have it spring back up when he moves to work on another section. Lucifer takes great joy in his brother’s abject confusion.

He pours Linda a drink and toasts with her. “Well done, Doctor,” he chuckles.

The baby has grown, just as Beatrice has. As soon as Amenadiel finally finishes with the pack and play, Linda deposits Charlie inside. As Lucifer leans against the edge of the bar, whiskey in hand, he watches as the child flops around and sits up, then extends chubby little hands to grab the side of the pack-and-play. He pulls up, yells his joy, and claps for himself. As he claps, he falls. Lucifer laughs, and watches as the entire process begins again. Arms come around him, and the Detective presses a kiss between his shoulder blades. He turns, opens his arm and she folds herself into the space, head tucked below his chin. It feels as if she was made for him. (Perhaps she was, he thinks, and that thought doesn’t pain him as it once used to.)

He presses a kiss to the crown of her head. “I’ve missed so much,” he says. He can’t help the stab of sadness as he says it. Everywhere he looks, every conversation he has had since his return, he is reminded that life has continued while he sat in Hell, eternal and unchanging. He knows that this is something that will not change when he goes back. It hadn’t occurred to him, before, that he would miss so much of their lives, or that missing it would hurt. She nods against him, and he continues, “They’ve grown, changed.” He doesn’t need to tell her that he means both Charlie and Beatrice. He tilts her face up to him and kisses her. It’s soft and slow, filled with all of the emotions he’s feeling as he watches this family, his family, move through his space. She tastes of the same bourbon he is drinking and makes a soft sound against him and deepens the kiss. There’s no heat though, just joy, and love. He rests his forehead against hers. “I love you,” he says softly.

She smiles at him. “I know.” He makes a tsking sound, and she laughs. “Okay, fine. I love you, too.” Beatrice calls for her, a board game in hand that Linda has brought along. He watches his guests (his family, he thinks, and it’s still so foreign and new, but the joy—oh, the joy) crowd around on the floor, laughing and arguing playfully as they set up the board and begin their game. He finds his way to the piano and thumbs through his mental song list for something that fits his mood, then thinks of the perfect one. Not quite a nineties jam, but very close, and encompasses perfectly the feelings filling him. As the others begin to play the board game, he starts to play.

He sings, too, because they lyrics are an embodiment of the things burning hot and bright in him.

Soft and slow, a little melancholy to begin with:

*Find me here and speak to me*
*I want to feel you, I need to hear you*
*You are the light that’s leading me*
To the place where I find peace again.

Hell, a place of no peace. His memories of this home, the only place he’s ever felt he belonged. The only people he’s ever belonged to.

You are the strength, that keeps me walking.
You are the hope that keeps me trusting.
You are the light to my soul.
You are my purpose, you’re everything.

The impossibility of finding things he didn’t even know he could have, things he didn’t even know he could be. Whole. Wanted. Loved.
All those sessions with Linda, talking about trust and who he truly is, what he is searching for.

And how can I stand here with you and not be moved by you.
Would you tell me how could it be any better than this.

Chords building and then falling back into softness.

You calm the storms and you give me rest.
You hold me in your hands, you won’t let me fall.
You steal my heart and you take my breath away.
Would you take me in, take me deeper now.

The pain of the fall, of never knowing what it feels like to be accepted simply for who he is. The way the Detective found her way into his life and changed it. Trust, belonging, touch without lust, comfort—things his immortal life had never experienced until he came to know the people in this room.

Finally, strong and powerful chords, the exuberance and beauty of what life has become. The strength of the people he’s so fortunate to know so well, who know him so well.

And how can I stand here with you and not be moved by you.
Would you tell me how could it be any better than this.

You’re all I want, you’re all I need. You’re everything.

A refrain over and over again, because it doesn’t get better than this moment. He has everything he could possibly hope for. More, even.

When he plays the last chords and comes back to himself, he realizes they’ve all gathered around. Maze is leaning against the bar next to Dan, a glass tumbler in each of their hands. Amenadiel and Linda stand arm in arm next to Charlie’s pack and play. He’s drifted off to sleep. The Detective has an arm around Beatrice, her cheek laying on top of the child’s head.

Everything.

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He leans against the balcony railing next to Amenadiel and waits for his brother to fill him in.
“Well?” He finally says.

“It’s fine, Luci,” Amenadiel says after a moment. “I watched the gates for awhile last night, then came back home. This morning I flew in and surveyed everything. Nothing seemed amiss.”
Lucifer sighs in relief. He puts a hand on Amenadiel’s shoulder. “Thank you, brother.” He looks up at the sky, turning brilliant shades of purples, pinks and oranges as the sun sinks to the west. “I fear I have more to ask of you, however. I need a few days, to get them settled, to just be with them. I find I can’t bear the thought of leaving them so soon. I thought they would move on. I didn’t realize, didn’t understand . . .” he trails off, unable to put into words his feelings regarding the hole he senses was left in their lives in his absence.

Amenadiel turns to face him. “It’s already done, Luci,” he says. Lucifer is shocked, and doesn’t know what to say. “I don’t think you understand what it did to her when you left. She spent weeks working with us to try and figure out how we could get you back. But you’d barred the gates against me, and there was nothing to be done. When she realized it was hopeless, she just stopped coming. Whenever we saw her, it was like she was fading.”

Lucifer drops his head between his hands. He’d suspected as much, by piecing together little things that she said, that Maze had said, but it’s still difficult to hear.

“A few months ago she started coming around again. She would talk to Linda. But she wasn’t the same. Linda was really, really concerned. So was Maze. But at the same time, brother, we all understood what you were doing. I can’t thank you enough for the year you’ve given me with my son, unencumbered by fear of a demon invasion. Not to mention the fact that had it not been for you and your stubbornness, I would have them—Linda and Charlie. So, this is the least that I can do.”

Lucifer nods and doesn’t know what else to say. He’ll take what he can, do what he has to, but he knows there’s no happy ending to this story. He wants it, oh how he wants it, to grow old with her and love her for the rest of his days, to follow along behind her when she leaves the Earthly plane. To not have to consider that there will be a time, no matter what he does, when she will grow old and he will not be able to follow her into eternity. They don’t get to live happily ever after. He and the Detective will spend as much time together as they can, take whatever they can. He will return to Hell. She will live her life (alone, he has realized, because if he’s learned anything in the past 24 hours, it’s that she’s not the ‘move on’ kind, and does it make him bad that a part of him is glad?). She will eventually die and go where he can not follow. They will have to take what they can, and it will have to be enough. He will have an eternity of only memories. His stomach churns, because it’s not enough. But he also must admit that it’s far more than he hoped for. So he thanks Amenadiel again, and means it.

Maze goes home with Linda, Amenadiel, and Charlie, but Daniel stays. Lucifer can see he isn’t ready to be away from Beatrice yet, and it doesn’t really bother him like it once might have. They seem to have come to an understanding, the three of them. At the Detective’s request, Lucifer sends someone to collect a list of items from her apartment. A evening stretches into night, they eat Chinese on the balcony with companionable conversation. Beatrice tells Lucifer about her new school and her friends. Daniel and the Detective add in little details. Lucifer just listens, because what can he add? He’s been in Hell and nowhere else while they’ve been separated. Lucifer watches as the child’s eyes grow heavy. His bathroom, the only bathroom, is used for a shower and brushing teeth. Pajamas are donned. Daniel and the Detective sit on either side of the child as she and the Detective take turns reading from a Harry Potter book retrieved from the apartment. Lucifer just leans against the bar and watches them, reveling in their faux voices and laughter as they read. It’s lovely and innocent.

Daniel stretches out on the chaise again, and this time it’s Beatrice in his lap, looking sweet in her sleep. As Daniel runs his fingers through her hair and the Detective pulls a blanket over her, Lucifer says, “She was so brave today. It really was incredible.”

When they are sure the child is asleep, they talk in hushed tones. “I talked to Ochoa earlier,” Chloe
says, updating them. “Teirning’s three goons are singing regarding how they got orders, but they still don’t know who is funneling information for him from the prison. We need to be careful, until we know for sure.”

Dan nods. “Until they find that leak, and plug it, we don’t go anywhere that isn’t secure.”

Lucifer eyes the Detective. “Any of us,” he says pointedly. He turns to Dan. “Teirning was absolutely loathsome during our meeting, if the Detective didn’t give you the blow by blow. I’ve only ever met one other so *vehement* about filicide, and it was not pleasant.”

Daniel’s face scrunches up. “Fili-what?” He says, confused. “I swear man, you make no sense sometimes.”

The Detective clarifies, “Killing his kid, Dan. He told us, in no uncertain terms that he wanted to kill his son, and Lucifer, and me, and get out of prison.”

Daniel sighs. “Well, that’s just grand. You’re sure we’re safe here?”

The Detective nods. “Ochoa has a couple of uniforms watching the place.”

“And I have several security measures in place, as well,” Lucifer adds.

Daniel sighs, relieved. “I guess we’ll just take it as it comes then,” he says. “I’m suspended for at least 10 days for tampering with evidence,” he sighs, “although nothing was actually destroyed.

Lucifer raises an eyebrow. “Have you talked to Maze? You two work well together, and I can say with first hand experience that not just anyone can work with Maze. Whatever happens with the LAPD, you should consider your options.” Lucifer sees how Dan doesn’t always work well within the confines of the system, but doesn’t quite always know what to do with it. He knows that the dichotomy between what he perceives as by the book and what Daniel considers right do not always align, and it causes the man a great deal of grief. He suspects Daniel will be far happier hunting bad guys with Maze, unencumbered by the finer points of police procedure.

Daniel tilts his head, considering. “Hmm, maybe. Definitely something to think about. Irregardless, I am here for whatever Trixie needs until then.”

The Detective nods. “And I already took a five day leave of absence,” she says. She looks at Lucifer as she says it. “Until things settle,” she adds.

Daniel nods, and the Detective his hand. “You should get some rest,” she says. “Goodnight, Dan.” She bends down and kisses one more kiss to her sleeping daughter’s forehead. “Love you, Monkey,” she says softly. “Maybe let’s not have anymore day’s like today, okay? My heart can’t take it.” His heart squeezes. They have been so very fortunate, really. Beatrice is unharmed, the Detective is alive. Now, she takes Lucifer’s hand and pulls him up the stairs. There’s the minor issue that there is no privacy, since the bedroom has no door, but that’s just fine for what he has in mind. He pulls her toward the bathroom and thinks about the words she said to him that morning.

As soon as the door is closed, he locks eyes with her. “Lucifer,” she says softly, and it’s full of want. Not lust but *want and love* and it makes all the difference; he wants to hear her say his name like that every day from now until the end of time. That is all it takes. He is on her, devouring her mouth. He undresses her carefully, kissing as he goes. She’s soft and pliant under him, hands carding through his hair, over his clothed chest and shoulders. First to go is her terribly sensible shirt, then her jeans. He takes his time as he goes, worshipping her like he has worshipped nothing in his life. Next to go is her even more ridiculously sensible underwear. She makes soft breathy sounds,
intermingled with his name, as he devours every inch of her luminous skin. It’s soft and sweet and ridiculously sensual. She gasps quietly as he nibbles and licks and explores, her hands always returning to his hair. She’s perfect and he simply can’t get enough of her.

When she’s finally naked before him, she returns the favor, and he feels like he might implode. *I at least want you to undress me and have it mean something*, she’d said. She runs her arms along his forearms, kissing each palm as she undoes the cufflink and unrolls his sleeve. He lets her name, *her name*, out on a moan, and her eyes fly to his. She attacks his mouth, then, and he is lost to her. He never loses control with a woman, *never*. He’s never vulnerable and he’s always in control, always playing the part that they want. He takes and he gives, but he never lets go, not until now. She kisses down the column of his neck, and *bloody hell* his vision whites out and it’s better than hanging the stars as she undoes a button, spreads the fabric, repeats. He closes his eyes and just lets her take her time, savors each touch and kiss. When, hours or minutes later, she finally removes his pants and touches him for the first time, he nearly comes right then and there. She laughs, low and throaty as she explores him, saying “*Of course you are commando under those suits. Why should I be surprised?”*

He can’t take it anymore, so he grabs her hands, kissing her as he pulls her toward the shower. He starts the shower, and they step under the warm stream. He takes his time *really* getting to know her mouth as the water cascades around them. He just kisses her, and she kisses him back, hands exploring every inch of each other. Lucifer thinks again that’s its more erotic than any other sexual encounter he’s ever had with another woman. When they are both breathless and every nerve endings on fire, he presses her against the marble wall, a hand on either side of her head, and presses a thigh into her core. She moans his name, and he devours that as he’s devoured her. When it can no longer provide enough friction, he moves his hand to her warm, wet heat. She’s soft and ready, and he thinks he may lose himself just from touching her. She bites his shoulder as she rides his hand, and it would take nothing to lift her and slide home, but he doesn’t want to do that with her daughter and her ex-husband sleeping just around the corner. He wants to hear her, the first time he takes her, without fear of interruption or impropriety. They’ve spent years, *years*, building towards coming together, and he isn’t going to rush it.

Now, he makes such amazing noises when she comes around his hands that he can’t help it, he plunges over the edge too, coming in the hand she’s kept on him as he explored her with his fingers. It’s the first time he’s ever came without his own permission, but he doesn’t care. There’s no embarrassment between them, only love. When he’s thought about this before, he had always thought that not knowing what she wanted, what she desired, would bother him, but he doesn’t think of it now. He just surrenders himself to her, to finding the things that make her call his name in desperation and following her lead. There’s never been anything so effortless in all of his ancient life as loving her.

When they recover, he washes her hair and every inch of her skin, worships her like he’s never worshipped anything in all his time. When he’s done, she does the same for him, kneading the roots of his hair with strong hands, sliding over every inch of him until their both breathing heavily again. They dry each other with soft touches and kisses, and then reverse the undressing with slow, careful movements as they put on their pajamas. The Detective pouts at the unfairness that he wears only silk boxers. “Where’s the fun in putting that on?” She asks. He laughs, and before he puts her pajama bottoms on her, he pulls her against him and lets his silk-clad thigh slide against her legs, her core. He lifts her on the counter, just on the edge, and lets her feel what she does to him through the silk sliding against her.

“That’s the fun, darling,” he breathes into her mouth. And then are in bed and making out like a couple of randy teenagers, and that’s as far as it goes. He whispers his love to her, and she to him, and it’s perfection. Lucifer knows that when they come together, after all this building, it will be so
much more than the sum of anything he’s ever experienced. Nothing else compares to anything with her, it’s both the strangest and simplest, most natural thing ever.

They fall asleep as they woke up hours and a lifetime before, facing one another, hands intertwined. *Everything.*
A soft voice wakes Lucifer up. “Mommy? Lucifer?” He can see Beatrice silhouetted in the doorway.

He nudges the Detective with his foot. She grunts and roles into him. Bullocks. “Beatrice, is everything alright?” He asks, for lack of anything better to say.

The child takes a step into the bedroom, hesitates. “I . . . I had a nightmare.”

Lucifer nudges the Detective again, with no avail. He has no idea what to do with a human child who has had a nightmare. He is usually the nightmare, he thinks, and discards it. He thinks of the Detective pulling the child close for a hug, all the times she curled in close to the Detective or Dan after a traumatic situation. “Would you like to come in?” He asks carefully.

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Sorry for the delay here all -- pretty sure I am going to need to make this sucker 9 chapters instead of 8. This thing became a monster of 7k+ again, because Lucifer has a lot of baggage.

Angst and fluff, y’all. Enjoy!
protectiveness she causes him to feel. He thinks of Linda, and all the times she probed to get him to talk about his troubles. “Do you wish to speak of it?”

When she nods, he tries once more to nudge the Detective with his foot. He is desperate for reinforcements—he has no idea what he’s doing. “What’s wrong with your leg?” The spawn asks, sounding a bit confused.

Oops, wrong leg, Lucifer thinks. “Leg cramp,” he says with the wave of a hand. Of all the times in their partnership, he could use the Detective for backup now more than ever, and she was asleep.

The Detective’s spawn wrinkles her nose. “You are funny, Lucifer. I missed that. I missed you,” she says, suddenly serious. “You didn’t say goodbye before you left.” Lucifer feels a tight knot form in his throat and says nothing. What can he say? “In my dream,” she said softly, “You were gone again, and Mommy got hurt.” Her voice is small and so unlike Beatrice’s usual spunky sound. He finds himself reaching for her hand and taking it in his own. It’s much larger than when last he held it, but still dwarfed by his own long fingers, with soft skin and fine bones underneath. She continues, “I don’t have to worry about her as much when you are here. But you left, and I saw her get shot and I was so worried she was dead.” She closes her eyes and the tears fall, and Lucifer can’t fault her for that as he remembers again how close it was. He squeezes her hand and wonders what he is supposed to do with a crying child. But he won’t hush her, or murmur pleasantries of there now, it’s alright. It very nearly had not been alright. It spoke volumes that after being taken and held captive for more than twelve hours, the Detective’s spawn was far more worried about almost losing her mother than anything she had personally gone through. Selfless, like her mother, he thinks.

So he lets her cry, and he sifts carefully for the words he should say. As much as the Detective is his world, she is far more Beatrice’s, for Lucifer had a beginning before her—a time when she was not there—that made her presence all that much brighter for him. But the child, her world literally begins with her mother, who brought her into the world and cared for her as a mother should, with kindness and compassion and love. “Do you trust me, Beatrice?” Lucifer asks when her tears begin to slow and she calms down. The not-so-little girl nods her head. Their relationship has always been easy, but her trust still warms him. “Good, thank you for that.” He decides as with all things, honesty is best. The Detective’s breathing changes and he hopes for a moment she has finally awoken to assist before he muffs it up, but of course the Devil can’t have that kind of luck. So he must continue. “I would do anything to keep your mother safe, Beatrice. Anything.” He swallows, thinking of the sliding on her blood as he tried to help her stand, of her blood circling down his drain with the ash of Hell as he washed it from his hands. “I cannot promise you that I will not leave, for I must return. I have something important that I have to do.”

“But…” she starts, shaking her head.

“Let me finish,” he says gently, squeezing her hand again. “I promise you that I will let you know before I leave again, and I will show you how to reach me.” He pauses and considers again if he should share this next bit, or if it is too much for her.

She completely nullifies his worry by asking, “Why do you have to go back to Hell? Can’t you just stay?”

He scoffs. Of course she believes him, and knows where he has been. Since the beginning, she has always accepted what he has said at face value. Still, the Detective will not like this turn of events. He wishes again she were awake to assist. “Where did you hear that?” He asked, even though he was sure he knew the answer.

“Maze told me.” Of course. The child goes on, looking less sad now and more pensive. “I was
really angry with you for leaving, because Mommy was so sad. She did and said all the same things as before, but she never smiled, not really.” Bullocks. “But then Maze told me you went back to keep the demons from coming to Earth, that not all the demons are like Maze.” The child pauses and worries her bottom lip between her teeth, just as her mum does. “She also said you already went to Hell twice before to save Mommy, and that you made a deal with your Dad for her, and that had to have been hard for you because your Dad isn’t very nice, especially not to you.”

Lucifer feels as if the wind has been knocked out of him. “She should not have told you that, child.” He feels off balance and unsure, but is now suddenly glad the Detective was not awake to hear Maze’s categorical indiscretion with the truth.

The child now squeezes his hand. “I’m glad she told me, Lucifer. I couldn’t be mad at you anymore. Even though she was sad, even though we all missed you, you went for Mommy, and for me and for Charlie. . . for everyone. I think that was brave.”

Lucifer swallows against the knot in his throat. All in then, he supposed. “I knew your mother needed me because she prayed to me when they took you, Beatrice. If it’s okay with her, I will show you how, too. If you ever need me, all you would need to do is call me and I would come. Does that help?” She seems to think about it, and nods. “So long as I am able, Beatrice, no harm shall come to you or your mother on my watch. You have my word.” He means every word, and hopes she knows it. “Now, sleep, child.”

“Lucifer?”

Bloody Hell, he is so far out of his depth at the moment, he has no idea what she’s going to ask now. “Yes, Beatrice?”

“I don’t want to ever go back to the apartment. All I can think about is Mommy’s blood on the floor.”

Bullocks. What to say to that? “That I understand, all too well, child.” Honesty seems the safest route here. After all, he certainly doesn’t disagree with her assessment. He’s having a hard time forgetting about all that blood himself, and he has a fair amount more experience with the topic. Then an idea comes to mind, something he hadn’t thought of for quite some time. “Actually, I may have something in mind for that, the housing issue that is, but you must sleep so we can address it tomorrow.” The spawn wrinkles her nose again. “And as for the rest, I find it helps, if you can’t get that image out of your head, to hold on and just listen.”

Beatrice just looks at him for a moment, puzzled. She angles her head, and she listens. “Oh!” she says. “I get it, now.” She lets go of Lucifer’s hands and wraps her arms over the Detective’s, where she is holding her daughter snug against her. He watches as she closes her eyes and times her breathing with her mother’s. She’s asleep in a matter of minutes.

**

Chloe wakes up when Trixie begins to cry. She’s disoriented at first, confused by the soft satin sheets and the warm weight of her daughter against her. She hears her crying, but it’s soft and she’s facing away from Chloe. Usually when Trixie has a nightmare, she buries her face in Chloe’s shoulder to cry. It takes her a moment to find her bearings, and then she starts to remember. Lucifer’s penthouse, Teirning, Trixie. She already has her arms wrapped tight around her daughter, her back tucked against Chloe’s front. When the nightmares come, she likes to just hold her and let her get it out. As Trixie begins to quiet, Chloe blinks back sleep and starts to say something, but stops in her tracks when she hears Lucifer’s soft, melodic voice.
"Do you trust me, Beatrice?" She feels her daughter nod, and then closes her eyes again as Lucifer comforts Trixie by promising to keep Chloe safe. Her twelve-year-old daughter, who has just been kidnapped, has had a nightmare, and that nightmare is not about her own ordeal but her mother’s safety? Chloe feels a wave of guilt rise up. Lucifer promises Trixie to tell her he’s leaving and to show her how to reach him. And then Trixie asks why he’s going back to Hell. Damn it, Maze.

Sure enough, Trixie goes on and confirms her source. “Maze told me.” Chloe starts to speak up, but Trixie is on a roll now and gives Lucifer a piece of her mind. “I was really angry with you for leaving, because Mommy was so sad. She did and said all the same things as before, but she never smiled, not really.” It’s no surprise that Trixie was affected by her pain, but it still hurts to hear her say it. Guilt rears its head again. “But then Maze told me you went back to keep the demons from coming to Earth, that not all the demons are like Maze.” Trixie pauses, and Chloe knows now is the time to say something. But what can she say after hearing that? Sorry I was a mess, Trix. “She also said you already went to Hell twice before to save Mommy . . .”

Chloe tries not to react, because he what? But Trixie isn’t done. “. . . and that you made a deal with your Dad for her . . .” And that’s can’t be right, because Lucifer loathes his father.

“. . . and that had to have been hard for you because your Dad isn’t very nice, especially not to you.” Cast out from Heaven, skin flayed by the Cosmos, trapped in a place without music or food or a caring touch for longer than she can fathom. Lucifer, what did you do? She feels tears pool in her eyes and closes them, tries to measure her breathing.

She listens as Trixie comforts Lucifer, and Lucifer in turn comforts Trixie and implores her to sleep. She said you already went to Hell twice before to save Mommy. And as if unpacking all of that is not enough, that Lucifer died for her and bargained for her—the Devil made a deal for her life, Trixie drops another bombshell that breaks her heart in a matter-of-fact voice. “I don’t want to ever go back to the apartment. All I can think about is Mommy’s blood on the floor.”

Chloe breathes, even and measured, and she is ridiculously glad that Lucifer is having this conversation with Trixie right now because what on earth or Heaven or Hell is she going to say to that? It’s bad enough her daughter worries about her mother getting shot or poisoned, but now she actually has the mental image of her mother bleeding and on the floor burned into her brain. Her daughter’s mental image of home, already broken by divorce and two moves in five years, has been shattered by violence. Chloe thinks she might be ill.

“That I understand, all too well, child.” Lucifer sounds tired and ancient as he comforts Trixie. “Actually, I may have something in mind for that, the housing issue that is, but you must sleep so we can address it tomorrow. And as for the rest, I find it helps, if you can’t get that image out of your head, to hold on and just listen, child.” The words make no sense and Chloe can sense Trixie’s momentary confusion.

“Oh!” Trixie says. “I get it, now.” And then her little arms squeeze tight around Chloe’s own and the room becomes silent as Trixie matches her breath with Chloe’s. Chloe can tell the exact moment when she falls asleep, and as soon as she does, she squeezes her tighter, finally letting the tears fall.

She hears a loaded exhale from the space on the other side of Trixie. “Bloody hell, you’re awake over there aren’t you, Detective?”

She sniffs, rather than responding.

His hand finds hers under Trixie’s, holds on to them both. “You mustn’t blame yourself, Detective.” His voice is soft, pleading, and gentle.
He knows her too well, but she does. She does. “She shouldn’t have to think about these things, Lucifer! It isn’t fair,” she whispers into Trixie’s hair. She knows she sounds needy and desperate and she tries hard to keep her voice down so they don’t wake Trixie again. “She shouldn’t be thinking about all the ways I can be taken for her or the fact that I bled all over the floor of our home. That’s on me.”

Lucifer taps her hand. “Ironic coming, are you ready? This is me, Lord of Hell and absolute expert at self-blame, informing you that the only person who is at fault here is Jacob Teirning, and his lackies.”

Chloe buries her nose in Trixie’s hair and inhales, reminding herself that her daughter is safe and here.

Lucifer, because he is Lucifer, deadpans, “Isn’t it ironic, don’t you think?” He waits a pause.

“Lucifer . . .” He isn’t about to sing Alanis Morissette to her in bed after the world’s heaviest conversation, is he?

He sings, “A little too ironic, and yeah I really do think.” Of course he is.

She can’t help it, she laughs through her tears, and this is why she loves him, because he finds a way to bring levity when it’s needed. He’s loyal and good and he may not always say or do the right things, but he manages to really get it right when it matters the most.

His thumb cards softly and soothingly over her arm, and she relaxes, taking his advice. Hold on and just listen. She holds Trixie and listens to her even breaths. She’s almost a sleep when she remembers the Lucifer-shaped bombshell that Trixie dropped before the Trixie-shaped one.

“Lucifer?”

“Bullocks, this really isn’t my night, is it?” He complains and she hears him roll onto his back, sees him press both his hands to his face. “I was so close to not having to answer what you’re about to say.”

She raises up a bit so that she can meet his eyes over Trixie’s head. “We don’t have to talk about it, if you don’t want to, but what the Hell, Lucifer? You went to Hell twice? For me? You hate it there! What does that even mean and how does that happen and what am I supposed to do with that piece of information?” She realizes her voice is rising again and she’s absolutely not okay with not talking about this now.

Lucifer sighs. “Right, come on then, I don’t want to talk about this over your offspring’s head.” He rises and goes does the stairs, heading for the balcony.

She slides out from under Trixie, pressing a kiss to her forehead and tucking her in. She pads out after Lucifer, sparing a quick glance at Dan, who is snoring soundly on the couch. Once she’s on the balcony, Lucifer slides the door shut behind her and motions to the rattan love seat. “Please, sit.”

She does, and he sits next to her. He angles toward her, his right knee touching her left. “Do you want to ask anything, or do you just want me to talk?” He asks, and she knows he will do this whichever way she prefers.

“Trixie said you went to Hell twice,” Chloe accuses, and she just can’t get over this piece of information, and the shadow of what it might mean. “Twice.”

It’s not a question, but he answers anyway. “I actually told you both times I died, but of course you thought it was metaphorical.”
She thinks about that, closing her eyes and sifting through 4 years of Luciferness. Of course, then she realizes things involving him going to Hell to save her (how is this really, truly, her life?) would probably involve her being in danger. She hits the pause button on the memory of Malcolm in the hanger as she delivers money to him in exchange for Trixie. Lucifer, king of loopholes, following her after he promised to let her go alone. Lucifer, shot in the gut and bleeding out on the floor. *I thought you were dead,* she’s said. *I was, I got better.*

“What Malcolm,” she said. “When you said you were dead, you meant it?!?” She realizes her voice is raising, again, but it’s not every day you find out your partner literally gave his life on multiple occasions to keep you safe. This is way, way more abnormal than being partners with the Devil.

Lucifer inclined his head. “Indeed.”

“But you came back.”

Lucifer swallows. “This is exceptionally complicated, so please, bear with me.” He leans back and looks at the stars, his right arm on the rattan behind her. “I knew I was going to die, and I feared for you and the child, Detective. It was not something I was accustomed to. So I prayed to my father, and asked him to protect you in exchange for me being the son he always wanted.”

Tears spring to her eyes. . . and that you made a deal with your Dad for her and that had to have been hard for you because your Dad isn’t very nice, especially not to you. “Lucifer . . .” And what can you even say to that?

“And before I knew it, I was back in Hell, and he showed me an open door. There’s a door for each resident, you see, and inside is a loop of sorts—a scenario on repeat that is an actualization of the guilt that sent the person to Hell. Most of the doors are unlocked, although no one ever tries to leave, but some of the more reluctant residents are locked in. My mum was the resident of the door Father showed me, and her door should have been locked. And then, just like that, I was back in the hanger. You know how that story ends.”

She breathes in, breaths out. Thinks about what he said. “There’s more though, isn’t there?” She’s thinking about Lucifer, prattling on about her being in danger for something Lucifer didn’t do, and then Lucifer, much later, completely unhinged. She really starts to worry when he leans forward and runs his hands through his hair. “If you don’t want to, if it’s too hard, you can tell me when you’re ready.” And this time she means it, because she remembers him standing in the hospital lobby goading a sniper, and she remembers being worried for him. Whatever had happened then had hurt him, badly. She takes his hand now, praying that she won’t lose him to the memories, hoping to anchor him here with her.

“I initially assumed Father wanted me to return Mum to Hell, and that our deal would be fulfilled. But Father doesn’t actually ever talk to me. Once I found Mum . . .” He pauses, stands up and paces. It reminds Chloe of a caged animal. She remembers him thinking every case they caught involved his mother, and then he dropped it like it was nothing. *Because he didn’t know which body she was in,* Chloe realized, remembering what Lucifer had said about his mum possessing Charlotte Richards. Lucifer paces up the balcony and back down, then sits again. He takes a measured breath. “I thought she had stood by, when he cast me out. I was furious with her, because I thought she had sat idly by whilst my Father sent me on a one-way ticket to Hell.”

Chloe nods, remembering their conversation in the care. “But she told you he wanted to kill you, and that she convinced him to cast you out.” She thinks of Trixie, and of what it would be like to spend years (no, centuries, millenia—oh, Lucifer) thinking that one parent threw you out and the other did nothing. She had known he had been hurt, but she was beginning to realize she couldn’t possibly fully understand the pain he had endured. She feels tears again.
“That’s right.” He stands again, a mess of nervous energy.

She can’t take it anymore. So many pieces are starting to slide into place and she can hardly bear the picture that is forming, that is so much worse than the traumas she had thought shaped who he was. She stands, says his name. He turns to face her, dark eyes troubled. He’s still wearing only his silk boxers. She walks to him and frames his face with her hands. “It’s okay, Lucifer,” she says softly, sliding her thumbs gently under his ears. He closes his eyes and brings his hands up to hold her wrists. At first she thinks he’s moving to stop her, but his touch is gentle, and he returns the sentiment of her thumbs by gently stroking her wrists. He takes a wrist and gently spins her so that her back is to his front. He carefully cocks one of his hips against the balcony as he pulls her flush against him, one hand on her hip, the other wrapped around her so that his hand rests above her heart.

“I love you,” he says, and she hates how broken he sounds. She bends down to kiss his hand.

“I love you, too.” She can’t see his face, but she can’t help but feel as if all the physical contact helps to ground him. So she gives a little more. “I won’t run and I won’t break, and I really think it’s important that you tell me the rest.” How long has he had to carry the weight of all these things? At least he had Linda, but Oh my God she really hadn’t understood until now, had she? (And then she vowed to herself, then and there, that she couldn’t say “Oh my God” anymore. She finally understood why Lucifer took such an afront to it.) “I’m here for you, Lucifer,” she says, knowing he needs to hear it.

She feels his nod, feels his head drop to rest on hers. The traitorous tears are there again. How much weight does his immortal soul carry? How has he not collapsed under the weight of it?

“I thought that I found a loophole,” he begins, quietly. “That my Father didn’t tell me what he wanted, only showed me the door, so I decided to punish Mum on Earth rather than sending her back.”

“Punish her how?” Chloe asks gently.

She feels a slight breath of air on her neck, and thinks she feels him smile just a little against her hair. “I sent her to live in Charlotte Richard’s life.”

“Oh, I bet the Goddess of Creation loved that.” She thought of how awkward Lucifer had been with Trixie in the beginning and remembered that Charlotte had two children of her own. She then immediately sobered when she remembered Dan mentioning, much later, that Charlotte’s children wanted nothing to do with her after her lost time (which okay, she know knows that Charlotte was possessed by the Goddess of Creation during that time). It seems that her parenting hadn’t improved, and the thought makes Chloe’s stomach role.

“Indeed,” Lucifer continued, caught up in the telling of his story and completely unaware of Chloe’s chaotic thought process. “It was nice to have her there, after so long, once I knew that she at least tried to save me. I suppose I kept her here for selfish reasons. It had been a long time since I had felt . . . “ He trails off.

Chloe hears the break in his voice. She thinks of how long he spent in Hell alone, how his parents appear not to have parented, and simply used him to do their bidding. He must have been so very, very alone. “You felt wanted,” she said simply. “The familial want.” Not sex or lust or favors, Lucifer was wanted for those things plenty. She remembers how surprised he had been that his charms did not seem to work on her. Her heart hurts for him. How long had he drifted alone and unmoored? She thinks of him earlier with Trixie, how well he handled the minefield of a twelve year-old’s nightmares. She was absolutely certain that if Lucifer ever had a nightmare, no one
comfotered him. She remembers how alone she felt after her father’s death, with her mother there but drowning in her own loss. She can’t even begin to imagine how Lucifer must have felt, cast out and alone. And then she remembers the little bit that he had told her when they were looking for Trixie —Amenadiel, his now closest relation, had tried to have him killed. She closes her eyes and the tears finally fall. Oh, Lucifer.

She feels him nod against her head. “All the time, humans and angels alike do things in my Father’s name. When he does give messages, they are often vague and incoherent. I was so tired of everyone, myself included, acting like we know what he wants. So Mum stayed and everything was acceptable for a time. Amenadiel, though, warned that Father may not be pleased with how we interpreted our deal.”

She had met Amenadiel by then, Chloe thinks, and they had seemed close. But then they seemed close when she was dealing with Malcolm, who Amenadiel resurrected to kill Lucifer. She feels dizzy, trying to keep up with the everchanging picture as more pieces click into place.

“I brushed him off,” Lucifer continues, “but then you were in your car accident.” She remembers how he reacted to that, overprotective and irrational. His grip on her tightens. “My youngest brother, Uriel, made himself known to me the following day.”

Her breath catches as she realizes he wasn’t being irrational at all. “He caused the accident?” She asks, surprised.

“Uriel’s power, if you want to call it that, is—was—in interpreting sequences.” Chloe’s heart plummets at the change in tense. “So he set up a sequence to cause the accident. When he made himself known, he gave an ultimatum—return Mum to hell or he would reclaim the life Father had spared by returning me to life.”

He is quiet then, and she is thankful for the opportunity to catch up. Her brain works to reconstruct what she remembered in the frame of what he has just told her. She thinks back to the time after her accident. They had the case with the washed-up martial arts actors, and then immediately after that Lucifer has completely got off the deep end. The next case had been the sniper, and that was when she’d known there was something terribly wrong. She lifts his hand from above her heart, placing a kiss on his palm. She doesn’t know what to say, because she knows what comes next has hurt him a great deal, and she has an idea of the direction the story is going to take. Uriel’s power was in interpreting sequences. Past tense. What can she say?

“Mum offered to return to Hell to save you,” he says softly. “Two things changed everything. The first is that Uriel told me he was not sent by Father, but was doing what Father would eventually want. As if he knew. As if any of us knows, because the righteous bastard never talks to us, no matter how often we talk to him. And the second is that I found out Uriel had the Azrael’s blade. Azrael is my sister, the Angel of Death, and her blade obliterates celestials from existence.” Chloe swallows, thinking about the finality of the word obliterate, brain spinning as Lucifer keeps adding more complexity to an already ridiculously complex story. “He was going to destroy Mum.”

“An impossible choice,” Chloe says, and she cannot imagine the weight he’s carried. She knows where this is going and her stomach churns.

“We fought. He was going to start a sequence that would take your life.” He pauses, and she has no idea what to say, what to do. So she waits. They stand there for a long time, watching the lights of LA twinkle beneath them. When he continues, his voice is distant and full of pain. She puts each of her hands over each of his, pulling them to wrap around her, anchoring him. “Uriel was a pest when we were young. He always followed my around, always wanted to be included. I was the Light Bringer, but my angel name, Samael, means poison of God. Uriel’s name, on the other hand, is
Light of God. Even in my name, my father showed his disdain. But there was Uriel, acting on what he thought Father’s wishes were, and he was going to take you both. God’s light wanted both you and my own mum. I saw no other way, so I killed him with Azrael’s blade.” The loathing is so evident in his voice. “Perhaps Father knew what he was doing when he called me Samael after all. I killed my own brother, just like Cain.” His voice breaks, and she turns in his arms. She frames his face, thumbs over the tears on his cheeks.

“Oh, Lucifer, I am so sorry,” she says, and it is inadequate. She thinks about Cain-Marcus, no Cain, and what she had learned in her research. Cain had killed his brother Abel because he was jealous of him. Lucifer had killed his brother to protect the people he cared about. “And you are nothing like Cain. He was selfish and scheming. You are none of those things.” She scoots down to make sure he meets here eyes, willing him to believe her words. “You are not poison, you made an impossible choice in an impossible circumstance. None of what you are telling me changes how I feel about you.” She knows this last part is important to say, especially after the way she reacted to his Devil face. Knowing what she knows now, she can’t imagine how much it hurt him to be rejected yet again. She will do anything in her power to make sure she never lets him feel that way again.

She thinks back to when Lucifer had goaded the sniper to shoot him, which she now knows was right after Uriel’s death. I want to understand, she’d said to him, back then. You can’t, he’d replied. Of course she couldn’t, because she didn’t believe he was the Devil, so how could he explain using a celestial blade to kill his angel brother to protect both Chloe and the Goddess of Creation, because Lucifer may or may not have held up the end of the deal he made with his dad while dying to keep her, Chloe Decker, safe from a resurrected dirty cop. This is exceptionally complicated, so please, bear with me, he’d said. Complicated, she thinks, does not begin to describe this storyline.

Lucifer drops his forehead to hers and they simply hold each other. His eyes are closed, and she simply hurts for him. He’s carried so much on his own for so long. She remembers that wild, nearly a thing they had right before she was poisoned, when he couldn’t believe the thing between them was real. The more she learns, the more every damn thing Lucifer had said that didn’t make sense at the time clicks into place. And they haven’t even made it to that part of the story yet. She’s relatively certain that his second return trip to Hell happened during that instance, and she can’t take anymore tonight. More importantly, he looks so tired, and she doesn’t want him to have to relive anymore tonight. She remembers him sitting in the mediator’s office after returning with a wife after she’d recovered from being poisoned. I’d been through Hell, both literally and figuratively. My greatest fears realized. She hadn’t understood, then, but she thinks she’s beginning to now. Too much. She takes his hand and tugs him toward the doors. “Enough for one night,” she says. “Let’s go to bed.”

“There’s more,” he says, and the exhaustion is evident event his voice. “If you wish to know the entire story . . .”

“There’s time,” she says, and hopes it’s true. “You’re exhausted, I’m exhausted, and I think you needed a break.” As they walk, he drops a kiss to her hair.

“Thank you, for not running away. I know this is a lot.”

She feels her stomach drop. He certainly should expect that from her, given her track record with the truth and running. It burns like acid in her stomach. “Never again, Lucifer,” she swears. She spins to face him, repeats his move from that first night of placing her fingertips on his face. Her thumbs card along his neck and she wills him to believe her. “I’m never running away again. You either, please. No more secrets, no more wasting time.” She kisses him, then pulls back. “But sleep isn’t wasting time. It’s necessary, especially given near death experience and celestial travel and healing and convoluted celestial stories and . . .”
He kisses her again. “I believe I understand,” he says with that ridiculous half smile of his, an eyebrow raised. How does he do that, despite everything? She feels as if she’s seeing him, really seeing him, for the first time. They re-enter the bedroom, and she’s surprised when he situates himself in the same spot, with Trixie between them. She’s rolled over on her back. Chloe nestles on one side, facing her daughter. Lucifer mirrors her actions. Their hands join over the sleeping form of her daughter. “Hold on and just listen,” Chloe says. “I like that, Lucifer.”

The edge of his mouth quirs. “I have found it to be most effective since my return,” he says. “I love you. Sleep, Detective.”

“You too, Lucifer.” He closes his eyes. She holds on, feeling his warm hand and the gentle rise and fall of Trixie’s breathing underneath. She listens to the separate cadences of their breathing. Hold on and just listen. She waits for his breathing to even out, thinking about how long it has taken Lucifer to get to a place where he feels loved. She remembers her own childhood, and how she never for one second doubted her parents loved her, despite her mother’s desire to drag her into acting. God, she thinks in a silent prayer. Maybe you could see fit to give Lucifer a break? He’s carried way too much for way too long and he’s so good. Please, just let him have some peace. No one deserves it as much as he does. She hopes, just this once, that God listens and puts his son first.

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The morning starts late and is everything a lazy morning should be. Lucifer wakes to Trixie and the Detective giggling in his bed, and it’s so right he doesn’t even question it. He makes them breakfast and the eat, along with Daniel, at the bar. The talk about nothing and everything, enjoying coffee and each other’s company. Except for the imp, of course, who doesn’t need coffee. She’s far more exuberant than either her mother or Lucifer given the interrupted and emotional night they’d had, and after an emotional day, too. Lucifer can not believe how well the Detective has taken the ridiculously large amount of information he has given her since catapulting, quite literally, through her apartment door scarcely over 24 hours ago. Not only has she taken it in stride, but she’s spending the morning smiling at him and touching his arms as she eats the breakfast he prepared. Miracle, indeed.

He pulls her aside after breakfast, putting the idea that came to him after his conversation with Beatrice into action. “I’ve been thinking about what the child said last night, about not wanting to return home. If it’s alright, I have a place I’d like to take you. I think it may solve that particular problem.”

She nods. “Okay,” she says softly. “We really don’t all fit here, so yeah, that might be good.”

He swallows, turning to watch the child with her father at the bar. “It’s important to me that you know that there are no strings attached to this. You can use it or not, you can stay or not—it’s whatever is best for you, and for her,” he says with a nod in Beatrice’s direction.

“Oh bullocks,” he says without a pause. “I don’t know what you mean, but okay.”

“Okay,” she says softly. “We really don’t all fit here, so yeah, that might be good.”

He swallows, turning to watch the child with her father at the bar. “It’s important to me that you know that there are no strings attached to this. You can use it or not, you can stay or not—it’s whatever is best for you, and for her,” he says with a nod in Beatrice’s direction.

“I don’t know what you mean, but okay.”

She laughs, and it’s like music.

**

Dan goes to the precinct to speak with Ochoa. Lucifer begrudgingly allows the Detective to have Maze fetch her car from the apartment while he searches for a suitable option that will accommodate
the three of them for the interim of his stay.

He’s surprised when Beatrice appears before him with a silver wrapped box as he stands on the balcony, contemplating the trip they are about to take. “Mommy saved this for me from Christmas, until I could give it to you,” she says, plopping herself into the same rattan he had occupied with the Detective the night before. He sinks down next to her. *She got him something for Christmas, when he wasn’t even there.* “I made it,” she narrates, toying with the bow, “in art class. Mommy had them pick it up when they got our things yesterday.”

She extends the package to him, and he takes it. He is a giver of gifts, but never a receiver. No one has ever, *ever* given him a wrapped gift.

“Beatrice,” he says softly. “Thank you.”

She tilts her innocent face up to him and smiles. “You don’t even know what it is yet, silly. Open it!”

He does, and finds a cup, slightly misshapen. “We did pottery in art,” she explains. “I made a dish for Mommy a long time ago, she still uses it for her jewelry. I thought you might be able to use something similar, for your cufflinks or pens, or whatever.” She shrugs, as if it was nothing.

He lifts the treasure from the wrapping. On it, carefully lettered, it says “Blood makes you related. Loyalty makes you family.” He thumbs the inscription reverently. *Family.*

“Ms. Nelson, that’s my art teacher, she has a kiln to fire the pottery. She helped me with the lettering.” He meets her eyes and she smiles. “I know your family . . .” she looks up, as if trying to find the words. “Mommy said they didn’t love you like they should have. We love you. You belong with us, now. Even more after all of this.”

She’d made him a gift while he was gone, even though he’d been gone for months, that declared him family, that mentioned loyalty. He was overcome, he simply didn’t know what to say. “Thank you, Beatrice,” he says again. “This is the most thoughtful gift I’ve ever received. I shall treasure it always.” Because she is herself, the imp throws herself into his arms, and he hugs her, dropping his head to the soft, unruly crown of her hair. When he looks up, he sees the Detective watching, tears shining in her eyes.

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Maze drops off the car and they drive to the same neighborhood Chloe had lived in when Lucifer had first met her. “I was in the neighborhood when you were away,” he explains carefully, and she thinks there might be a story there. “I saw this house on the market, and I don’t know why, but I just bought it.” He pulls into a gated driveway, an ornate, solid gate blocking their way. The entire property was bordered by a solid seven-foot concrete wall. “The security appealed to me, and I thought it might come in handy for our present situation,” he says as he punches in a code on the keypad. The gate slides open, and as they drive into the property, Trixie begins exclaiming in the back. A small (by Lucifer standards), quaint beach house sits, surrounded by dense foliage. While an ornate, unobtrusive fence surrounds the west side of the property beyond the house, the beach is visible.

“It reminded me of you,” he says softly. Trixie bounds out of the care to explore and they wait just a moment. “I didn’t know if you would return, but if you did, I hoped that you would eventually consider living here. When I left, I thought of leaving it to you, but I didn’t think you’d accept, nor did I think you’d want the reminder of me.”
She doesn’t know what to say to that, this underlying assumption of his that they would just move on, like he meant nothing, like he was disposable. She thinks of everything he told her on the balcony, everything he told her the day before, and she understands those assumptions are informed by his life experiences, and it breaks her heart. It breaks it even more when she thinks about him buying this house, hopeful in her absence, only to have her come home and break his trust. Lucifer did not trust easily, for reasons that were becoming ridiculously clear as he shared more of himself, but he trusted in her and she broke that trust in the worst way. So what can she say, what can she do but squeeze his hand and then open the door to follow after Trixie, trying hard to breathe through the knot in her chest. *How did he survive, how did he keep going with such an immortal burden?*

Trixie is standing on the front porch waiting for them, bouncing on her toes eagerly. The white wrap-around porch is so picturesque, with a porch swing facing the garden that hides the southern security wall. Butterflies dance in the soft morning light. Lucifer reaches out and opens the door, which causes Trixie to wrinkle her nose. “Hey,” she pouts, “I just tried that and it was locked.”

Lucifer laughs. “You still have a great deal to learn, offspring,” he says good-naturedly.

She expected the inside of the house to have Lucifer’s name written all over it, with posh Italian leather and authentic historical artifacts, but the inside of the house is breathtakingly simple, with gorgeous wooden floors and simple, homely furniture. The kitchen is in the center of the house and visible from all the rooms. She’s instantly in love with the place. He gives her a tour with flourish, explaining that they can pack themselves up or use movers, and bring whatever they’d like here. “It’s yours,” he says softly as Trixie runs out the large sliders to check out the pool and the beach beyond it. “For as long as you need or want it. No strings attached.” He hands her an envelope. She gasps when she finds the title in her name and keys inside. “Maze checked with the school, and no matter what Beatrice can finish the year where she is, and then from there you can either move her to this one, or you can use Daniel’s address to keep her where she is now.” That the Devil had even considered school zoning was more than her brain could process.

Chloe looks around the beautiful, open house that feels like a perfect mix of both herself and Lucifer. She sees herself in the simplicity of the space, in the beach and the soft greys of the decor. The floor to ceiling windows along the west wall, overlooking the pool and the beach beyond, and the openness of the floor plan scream Lucifer’s name. She thinks about the past year and how adrift she felt without him, resorting to bringing whatever pieces of him she could into her own space—his liquor, a silly calendar about old cars—just to feel close to him. She knows if he had offered this before he left, she would have turned him down. But she has lived without him for damn near a year and she doesn’t want to do it again. She knows what that looks like and it isn’t pretty. She looks at the beach and thinks about sharing this space with him for however long they will get before he goes back. She thinks of waking up without him and looking out the window and at least not having to search so hard for a connection to him. The answer is so obvious to her.

She looks at him and she sees a sadness in his eyes that she doesn’t fully understand, but she’s starting to at least get a feel for the edges of it. He’s worried she won’t want it, but also scared that she will, because as far as he is concerned, she shouldn’t want him. He wants to take care of her and love her, but he doesn’t feel he’s worthy. (And for crying out loud, she chastises herself, he *told her this years ago when she kissed him for the first time and why didn’t she just listen, really listen to him when he talked to her!?*) So she throws her arms around him and kisses him. “Thank you, Lucifer. I love it.” And she does. They could easily make this place home. She looks at Trixie, who is already sliding the giant glass doors open to take in the pool and beach stretching beyond. She knows what her daughter’s answer will be. She pulls back and taps the envelope with the title against her hand. “But it’s missing something.”
He raises an eyebrow, curious. “Oh? And what’s that?”

“A piano,” she says. She steps right up into his space and has to tilt her head up to see his face. “I want this to be home, and it can’t be unless you’re in it.”

He looks down on her with that ancient, unreadable gaze she’s seen too many times, and why couldn’t she see the depth of the hurt and fear behind it before. She’s not sure she’s ever going to forgive herself for not seeing him. And then he smiles, dropping his forehead to hers and he nods. “Okay, then. A piano it is.”

Trixie is back in front of them then, bouncing on her toes and pulling at Chloe’s sleeve. “Mommy, you have to see the pool! And the beach!” She tugs her along, and Chloe reaches out to snag Lucifer’s hand as they go. She’ll hold on to him for as long as she can.
Home Port

Chapter Summary

For eons, he never belonged anywhere. Heaven didn’t want him, Hell could not hold him. Here on Earth, he finally felt he belonged, but duty has bound him back to Hell. Now he is like a ship that must travel between worlds, with a job to do in Hell while his heart and soul is here. She is his home port—the place that is emblazoned on him for all eternity, the place he will always return to. The only place he belongs.

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A/N: I STILL think I may have to add another chapter to this beast, beyond the 9th chapter. It just keeps growing and growing. Enjoy and Happy Friday! The next chapter probably won’t be ready until next Friday. Un-Beta’d, so all mistakes are mine, but sadly the characters and the musics (and the house!) are not.

I am keeping this at Mature, but some finally resolved sexual content at the end here.

*Fans self*

The house was so awesome. The pool was just the right size—not so big that it seemed like it didn’t belong. Trixie already was thinking about who she could invite over for a pool party. She had no idea how long they would stay here, but she hoped it was a really long time. When they lived in Grandma’s house, they went to the beach all the time. Since they moved to the apartment a few years ago, the trips had been happening less. She missed the beach. It was wild and free and felt so much more like home than any of the places she had lived since her parents had split.

Now, she found herself drawn to the beautiful iron fence separating the pool from the beach. She stands and feels the wind from the ocean on her face, listening to the crash of the ocean. Mommy comes to stand next to her, nudging her with her shoulder like she always does. “What do you think, Monkey?”

“This place is so cool, Mommy. Does it belong to Lucifer?” She breathes in the ocean air again.

Her Mommy leans her head down, meeting her eyes, with that smile she has when she’s about to share something she knows Trixie is really going to like, but goes against The Rules. “What would you say if I told you it was ours, and we could stay as long as we wanted?”

Trixie starts bouncing on her toes again, unable to believe it. “Really?” When Mommy nods, she throws herself into her arms. “Cool! Can I have Sarah and Liza over for a pool party next weekend? Can I have the room with the balcony?” She grabs Mommy’s hand and pulls her back to the house. “Not the big room, but the little one next to it?” On her way back to the house, towing her mother, she sees Lucifer watching them from next to the pool, hands in his pants pockets. He’s smiling as he watches them. She throws herself into his arms for good measure, because this place is the best and way better than his stuffy penthouse, even with all its cool expensive things she can’t touch. “It’s perfect Lucifer,” she says. “I miss the beach! Let’s go pick my room!”

He laughs, and she rushes into the house, past the ridiculously big kitchen that has a view of the whole house. The curving staircase leads to a landing. The biggest bedroom has floor to ceiling windows, facing the ocean. The windows remind her a lot of the windows in Lucifer’s bedroom at
his place. Like at Lucifer’s, a large balcony is accessible through sliding doors. The biggest bedroom is right at the top of the stairs. Tucked next to it is a smaller bedroom with pretty white French doors. The small balcony faces the southwest. She sees the room with new eyes from their quick tour earlier—it could be hers. She bounces on her toes again as she waits for Mommy and Lucifer to catch up. “Can I have this one, Mommy?” She asks as soon as they arrive. When Mommy smiles and nods, she launches herself at her again. The four-post white bed has netting draped around it and looks fit for a princess. She launches herself at it and bounces. Finally, something really, really good.

Lucifer cooks them lunch after prattling around the house and the grounds for most of the morning. Because he is Lucifer, the kitchen is fully stocked. She doesn’t know how he manages these things. The food is delicious, and Chloe simply sits at the island and watches him as he cooks, while Trixie bustles around the house making exclamations over some feature or another. She didn’t even know how much she needed this exact thing until she’s sitting there. In the short time Lucifer has been back, things have been so chaotic and they have been constantly been dealing with one thing or another. The pieces of her that haven’t felt whole since he left suddenly seem to reappear as she sits and watches his fluid, effortless motions in the kitchen. Lucifer has connected his phone to the sound system in the kitchen (because of course any place he chose would have an integrated and kick ass sound system), and he is humming along to Smooth by Rob Thomas and Santana. He has shed his suit jacket and has his shirt sleeves rolled up. He wears the same damn Kiss the Cook apron he always wears when he cooks for them, and she’s not exactly sure how he manages to always have it on hand. Chloe rests her chin on her hand and just watches him, more relaxed than she’s ever seen him. Her heart squeezes, and she realizes no matter how long he stays, it will never be enough.

“Spawn,” he calls jovially to Trixie, “lunch is served. Do wash your hands.” He waggles his eyebrows at Chloe playfully as he sets a plate in front of her with a flourish, then sets another next to her for Trixie.

Trixie giggles. “I’m not a silly kid anymore, Lucifer, I know to wash my hands.” If she hadn’t been watching him closely at precisely the right moment, Chloe would have missed the sudden shadow that passed over his previously uninhibited face. “What is this, anyway?” Trixie asks as she sits down next to Chloe. “It smells yummy!”

“Shrimp and Parmesan Orzo with a strawberry vinaigrette salad,” he informs her. “Easy-peasy.” Chloe laughs at that. “Says you!” She accuses. Her lunch menu is limited to grilled cheese and hot pockets on the days she is home. She suspects living with Lucifer will make her fat. As he sits next to her, she considers again that they haven’t talked about him staying. She hopes he knows it’s a foregone conclusion, but she worries that he may try to pull back now that Trixie is safe and their living arrangements have been solidified.

They eat in companionable silence, the melodies from Lucifer’s 90s inspired playlist wrapping around them. The food is delicious, and Chloe finds the excellent view and the company beyond compare. She soaks the moment in, memorizing it and filing it away for safe keeping. As they are finishing, the small CTV recessed in the wall kicks on and the video link to the call box displays Dan and Maze at the front gate. Lucifer shows them how to buzz in guests, and then begins cleaning the kitchen. Trixie runs out to meet her dad, absolutely vibrating with sharing the excitement of the new house with both him and Maze. Chloe walks up behind Lucifer as he washes dishes, wrapping her arms around him. He is warm and smells like whiskey and spice and everything she’s been missing for the last year.
She finally speaks of the thing that’s been worrying her after she presses a kiss to his back. “You’ll stay?” She asks.

He stops what he is doing for a moment, then continues. “For a few days, at least,” he said, as if he was talking about a casual business trip.

She shakes her head and squeezes him tighter. “No, Lucifer, that’s not what I meant. I mean, it is, but I mean, you’ll stay here, with us, right?”

He stops washing them, drying his hands on his apron before he turns in her arms to face her. He leans against the counter and braces his hands on her hips, and she can’t help the electric jolt she feels when he touches her. “Do you wish for me to?” And she sees in his eyes that it’s not a foregone conclusion.

She can’t decide if she should kiss him or stomp on his toe. She settle for backhanding his stupid perfect chest. “What kind of question is that?” She accuses. “Of course, I want you to, we want you to. Don’t you know that yet? Are you ever going to get it through your thick Devil-skull?”

He throws his head back and laughs, sliding his hands around her back to grab her ass and pull her flush against him. “Well, when you put it that way, how could I ever refuse.” And then he’s kissing her, soft and sweet. Except soft and sweet lasts about three seconds, then the heat of his body and everything she feels for him bubbles to the surface, and she finds herself rising on her tiptoes and threading her fingers through his hair as she deepens the kiss. She tugs his hair a bit, and he groans and Chloe is lost to everything else. Right up until the moment she hears Dan clear his throat. Oops.

“Brought those things you asked for from the apartment, Chloe,” Dan says, unnecessarily.

She feels her face flame as she steps quickly back, feeling bereft more than embarrassed. She puts her index finger on her mouth for a moment as she re-equilibrates herself. “Uh, thanks Dan.” And then Trixie is there grabbing Dan’s hand, and the big duffle with her stuff, and dragging him upstairs. “You have to see my room, Daddy! Come on, you can help me unpack!”

Lucifer steps neatly around her and carries the two suitcases, loaded with her clothes and other items, neatly up the stairs.

Maze whistles as she enters the kitchen. “Nice view, Decker.”

Chloe hugs Maze and agrees. “It really is. Did you bring the things we talked about?”

Maze grins conspiratorially, showing just a few too many teeth. “Yeah, in the car. Grabbed some of his suits and his other usual go-to things. I can’t believe he didn’t ask me himself.”

Chloe had called Maze, once they had decided they would stay, and had asked her to bring some of Lucifer’s things too. She was worried he wouldn’t plan to stay and she wanted to make sure he did. “I don’t think he was sure we wanted him to. I don’t understand how he could think that.”

“He never wants to assume, Chloe, especially not when it comes to you.” Maze says carefully. Chloe thinks she hears subtext there, but then Maze, being Maze, just brings it into the open. “If he assumes, and you don’t, it will hurt him, so it’s better—in his mind, anyway—to guard against that. Don’t expect that to change anytime soon.” She shrugs. “It’s Lucifer.”

Chloe exhales. “Okay, so no assumptions. I guess I need to speak very slowly and be repetitive. Like parenting. Great. I’m parenting the Devil.” She throws her hands up as she considers the very different roles they had found themselves in moments ago.
“Whatever, Decker,” Maze says. “You gonna give me a tour or what?”

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At the child’s prompting, the five of them walk on the beach. Maze and Beatrice are well ahead of them—Maze, being Maze, is showing the child how to do a variety of flips and kick as they walk through the sand. Beatrice is doing a surprisingly good job imitating whatever Maze shows her. Lucifer thinks it will probably suit her well should she choose to follow in her parents’ footsteps. He remembers her taking on her armed assailant, and he’s so thankful that Maze has taken the time to show her how to take care of herself.

The Detective walks between himself and Daniel. When they are sure the child is out of earshot, the Detective finally speaks. “So what’s the update Dan?”

Dan walks with his hands in his pockets, watching his offspring and Maze. “Ochoa’s good,” he said. “He was able to find how Teirning was getting information in and out of the prison. He plugged that leak, and made sure Teirning is in solitary until his trial begins.”

The Detective lets out a sigh of relief. “So we’re out of the woods,” she says and she reaches out for Lucifer’s hand as she says it.

“It looks like,” Daniel replies. “Ochoa is keeping a uniform on me and he did have one on you, until you disappeared to this place. I think it’s actually better you’re off the radar, in case there’s someone at the department in Teirning’s pocket.”

The Detective has intertwined her fingers with Lucifer’s as Daniel spoke. How odd, this sensation of walking hand in hand with someone. It’s not something he’s done before. There has never been a need, nor a person he wished to hold hands with. He thinks of Beatrice grabbing his hand when they toured a school, years ago, and realizes it is a very human thing to do.

“It’s sad,” the Detective says, bringing Lucifer out of his introspection. “The whole thing with Pierce has made us distrust everyone.”

Daniel shrugs. “You call it sad, I call it playing it safe.” Daniel had, after all, very nearly idolized Pierce—Cain, and he had killed the woman he loved. Lucifer tightens his grip on the Detective’s hand. Daniel may have idolized him, but the Detective had nearly married him—the world’s first murder, and a criminal mastermind. And Lucifer had just stood by and let it happen, let him hurt her, and had very nearly lost her because of it.

“I’d like to take Trixie home with me when we go, if that’s okay.” Daniel said, watching as the girl does two cartwheels and then comes up in a sparring stance. Maze throws a soft punch in her direction and Beatrice blocks it. “I figured the two of you could use a chance to catch up, given . . .

The Detective stops in her tracks, looks at Daniel, then at Lucifer and then towards Beatrice and Maze. “Oh . . .” she says, uncertainty evident in her voice. While Lucifer is desperate for time alone with the Detective to finish what they started last night, he is fairly certain that the dropping sensation in his stomach is fear at the thought of the spawn going anywhere that he and the Detective aren’t. Strange. “I don’t know, Dan.”

Lucifer clears his throat. “There is a guest room here, Daniel, if your main reason is wishing to remain close.”

Daniel looked at him strangely. “We’ll see,” he said in a non-committal tone. "Uh, Chloe, there’s
something else. I submitted my resignation."

"What?" She stopped again. "They asked you to resign? Even knowing Trixie's life was at stake? Even though you went to Ochoa as soon as you could?"

Daniel shook his head. "I think it's time for a change," he said slowly. "This was my choice. Lucifer's idea, actually." The Detective turns to scowl at him. Uh oh. "It's time for a change. Maze and I work well together, and she's got more work than she can handle."

"You're going to bounty hunt with her." The Detective says, a statement, not a question. "What about Trixie?" She takes Lucifer's hand again though, and they walk again. Not catastrophic then, his involvement, he decides.

"I think I actually may be around more," he said. "Maze and I'll be sure to stagger our workload so one of us is always available to help you out. I can take work when it's convenient."

"You spent years on being a cop," the Detective says carefully. "Are you sure about this?"

Daniel reaches out for the Detective's other hand, squeezing it. "Yeah. It's time for a change Chloe. After everything that's happened, and honestly after everything I've done."

"Dan…"

"No, think about it, Chloe. Procedure and I don't always get along. I've fucked up so bad more than once, and it's cost me a lot. You, for one, and almost Trixie." Lucifer thinks of Palmetto and Malcolm, Perry Smith's trial, and the disaster with Teirning. "There has to be something out there that's more me than this."

The Detective worries her lip between her teeth for a few minutes, then nods. "Okay, then. I'm behind it if you're sure."

Ahead, Maze shows Beatrice how to use her body weight to flip a larger attacker off balance and onto the floor. The child practices, executes, and cheers as she lands the demon in the sand. **Well done, Beatrice,** he thinks, and pride swells.

In the end, it was the child who made the final decision about her sleeping arrangements. Maze tips the scales in Daniel's favor, promising ninja movies and pizza. Daniel plans with the Detective to go by the apartment again tomorrow and pick up more things.

Beatrice takes both of her mother's hands, bouncing on her toes as they prepare to leave. "Don't worry, Mommy," she says. "I'll be fine." For one so young, Lucifer thinks the spawn is rather adept at reading the people around her, but especially her mum. Lucifer wonders how hard things were for Beatrice over the past year, if the Detective was indeed as affected by his absence as Maze and Amenadiel had made it seem, if Daniel was as badly off as it had appeared. "Tomorrow we'll have game night and Lucifer will make us something delicious and I'll have all my stuff so my room will feel like mine and it will be awesome!"

He chuckled at her declaration. "And what exactly am I cooking, urchin?"

She swings her mum's hands as she turns impish eyes on him, lips pursed as she contemplates. "Spaghetti and meatballs," she finally declares.

"And so I shall," he says, waving his hand flippantly.
She laughed, then threw herself into him. "Take care of Mommy," she whispers quietly.

He tightens his arms around her. "I shall certainly do that too. I won’t let her out of my sight until you return. Until tomorrow, Beatrice."

"Bye, Lucifer!" She throws herself at her mother, kisses her and professes her love and he doesn't want her to leave them, even though he knows it's a completely irrational and unfounded fear. Maze and Daniel would die before letting harm come to her (but then so would her mother, and she almost had).

Maze deposits a leather duffle he recognizes as his own at his feet. “What’s this?” he asks, surprised.

“Decker’s idea. Clothes and a few things from the penthouse.” When he raises an eyebrow, Maze clarifies. “Don’t be an idiot, Lucifer. She was afraid you wouldn’t stay.”

Oh. If he was being honest with himself, he’d been preparing himself all morning to leave them here, to not make assumptions that they would want him to stay. He always prepared himself for the worst, because generally, that’s what happened. “Thank you, Maze.”

She shrugs. “If you need anything else, just let me know. Don’t fuck this up, Lucifer. She missed you.”

He exhales, uncertain that he is capable of not fucking up. “Keep a close eye on the spawn, please,” he says instead.

They go then, and he stands behind the Detective on the porch as they watch Daniel drive his boring car through the gate. He feels his stomach drop as the car drives out of sight, and it makes no sense to his rational mind. As soon as it closes, the Detective is in his arms, face pressed into his shirt collar as she cries. "I know she's safe, but…"

His arms tighten around her, and for once he knows exactly what she means. He thinks Linda would be proud. "I know," he whispers into her hair, stroking soothing patterns on her back. They sit in the swing and watch the butterflies dance in the long afternoon shadows until the Detective's eyes are dry and they have both convinced themselves that Beatrice's absence is not a sign of impending doom.

**

The piano arrives an hour later. There just so happens to be the perfect space for it in the living room, and the Detective just watches and smiles from her perch at the island as they bring it in and tune it. As he closes the door behind them, she finally gets up and comes to him. She puts her hands softly on his arms, cards them up to his shoulders. It’s a simple touch, soft and light, but it takes his breath away. She’s been so quiet since the child left, so pensive, and Lucifer isn’t sure what to make of it. He’s not sure where her mind is at. She reaches up and undoes the top button of his shirt, and after contemplating him for a moment, she undoes another. She slides her hands over his shoulders, eyes never leaving his. Her gaze is intense and he’s caught between the softness of her touch and confusion at what she’s doing. Her hands slide back down his arms, fumbling briefly at the edges of his rolled up sleeves before she slides down to his hands. She gives him a soft, sad smile that he doesn’t understand. The Detective looks down at their join hands and squeezes them. When she looks at him again, he’s confounded by the tears that are in her eyes again. “Will you play something for me?” She asks.

While he understood her tears before, as the child left, he doesn’t understand them now. “Of course,” he answers, because how can he deny her anything she asks of him? “A request, perhaps?”
She shakes her head. “Anything,” she says, and she rises to kiss him gently on the cheek. He watches with continuing confusion as she settles on the couch, curling her bare feet under her. He picks John Legend, *All of Me*, because it’s the first thing that comes to mind as he sits in front of the beautiful piano. He doesn’t sing, he simply plays the chords and lets them speak for himself. He closes his eyes, at first, almost afraid to look at her. He doesn’t understand the emotions in her face, and even though he knows in the rational part of his mind that nothing has changed, he can’t help but worry that something *has*. The part of him that’s responsible for the thought is the same part of both of them that didn’t want to let Beatrice out of their sight after everything they’d gone through to be together in the same place again.

When he begins to play the first verse, he meets her eyes, and what he sees there melts any worry he may have had. There are tears there, but also *love*. So much love there that it almost makes him lose his focus on the notes. He holds her eyes, willing her to believe the truth in the unspoken lyrics.

> 
The world is beating down on you,  
I’m around through every mood.

> 
You’re my downfall, you’re my muse.  
My worst distraction, my rhythm and blues

How many times do I have to tell you  
Even when you’re crying you’re beautiful too  
I give you all of me, and you give me all of you.

She comes to sit beside him somewhere in the last reprise of the chorus. She slides over on the piano bench on his right, until their thighs are barely touching. As he plays the last beautiful chords, she leans into him. The moment feels heavy and he can barely breath. She slides her right hand up and touches the left side of his chest, very nearly nuzzling into him. His breath catches, and he remembers her doing the same thing, years ago. It was shortly after she’d been shot by the infernal record producer, and she had been checking for a bulletproof vest. He remembers, because he remembers everything, how ridiculously hard he’d become as soon as she touched him, and also confused, because it was so out of character for her to nuzzle into him like that then, to touch him in that way. (And he relishes in the fact that it isn't out of character for her now at all, that her touching him like this is actually a part of his reality now, instead of just his dreams.) He looks at her in confusion, but says gently, “I remember.”

She smiles a little when she sees the recognition on his face, but her eyes still carry the perplexing mixture of love and devastation. He doesn’t understand. She swallows, then finally speaks as she strokes her hand above his heart. “I didn’t think I would ever hear you play again,” she said softly. “And I didn’t even realize, didn’t even understand, how much I needed a place that was *just ours* until you brought us here. Not yours, or mine, but *ours*, together.” She slides her hand back toward the center of his chest, then slides under his shirt this time. Her fingertips ignite the path they trace along his skin as they return to their place above his heart. The feeling is exquisite, and he stifles a groan. “When you were gone, I relived so many moments, Lucifer. I wished so many times that I could go back. Back then, I knew you were something else, and if I just would have pushed, maybe we could have . . .” She closes her eyes, and the guilt in her voice nearly breaks him as her tears fall. She has nothing to be guilty for. “We could have had more time.” She drops her forehead to meet his, running her hand up to his neck.

He can barely breathe as he frames her face with his hands, thumbs wiping her tears. “I wouldn’t have been ready,” he says. He can not abide by her feeling guilty, and he realizes, maybe for the first time, the truth of the words as he speaks them. He *wouldn’t* have been ready. It had taken him years, *years*, to understand the chaos inside of himself, to make sense of it and maneuver it without
making mistakes that would have hurt her, hurt them. “I barely am now. Maze told me not to fuck up before she left, and bloody hell, Chloe, I am terrified—that I am going to do just that. For all my time on this Earth, this type of relationship is completely new and unknown to me. I meant what I said, on the beach the first time you kissed me. I’m not worth it. Sooner or later, something is bound to happen to make you see that.”

Her shoulders shake a bit as she cries, shaking her head. Her hands mirror his as she frames his face. “How can you say that? How can you possibly think that? I love you. You are so worth it. You’ve lived to long without anyone telling you that enough, and I hate that and…” Her voice breaks and she tries to scoot closer. He runs his hands through her hair, lets one hand slide to her back to soothe her. “How can I possibly be enough, Lucifer? I’m just me, just Chloe Decker, and I’m mortal and how can I possibly be enough for you.”

Whatever he was expecting it wasn’t that. He starts to shake his head, starts to argue with her, but she isn’t done yet. And then she breaks him. “Sooner or later, I’m going to die Lucifer, and how can a few years or even decades be close to enough. You’ll go on and I won’t and how can that be enough for you?”

He makes a pained sound in the back of his throat at the thought and crushes his mouth to hers. He cannot bear the thought of losing her. When she draws back to take a breath, he sets the record straight. “You are enough. Never, in all the years in Heaven or Hell or Earth Chloe, has anyone ever seen me. You were the first. The only one. I love you. That is enough, you are enough. There will never be enough time with you, but you are so much more than enough for me. How could you not be?”

She kisses him with a small laugh. “Hello, insecurities!” She teases, and she kisses him again, and she tastes of tears and the sea, and he knows that no matter how long he has her, it will never be enough, but she is everything.

He rises, pulls her up with him and then draws her flush against him. “We took exactly as long as we needed to get here,” he says and again, he means the words that he hadn’t even known were true until he speaks them. “And no matter the insecurities, I want you, for as long as we have.” She holds his eyes, nods her agreement. “The rest of it, Detective, the rest of it doesn’t matter.”

And finally, finally they are there. There are no more roadblocks, no more self-sabotage, no more worries of manipulations or malicious intent. It’s just the two of them, and five years of building to the thing that they are. She has her hands on her hips and pulls him impossibly closer. “Love me, Lucifer,” she whispers just before she kisses him.

And he groans as he crashes into her, devouring her mouth, hands exploring every inch of her. He’s given and taken pleasure in every way imaginable, fucked and rutted and made people come, but he’s never made love. He’s saved that for her. He lifts her, feels her legs wrap around him, and he carries her up the stairs as she tries to climb into his mouth, and he welcomes her. When they arrive to the master bedroom (their bedroom, he thinks, and his heart swells), he sits with her straddling his lap. He never wants her to feel trapped under him, like she doesn’t have a choice. He moves from her mouth to her neck, blazing a path down to her collar bone as he reaches for the buttons on her far to sensible blouse. He takes his time undressing her, tracing paths with his hands and then following them with his mouth. She is exquisite in her passion, and it’s almost as if the fire in her eyes mirrors his. She can’t keep her hands off him either, unbuttoning the rest of his shirt and pushing it off his shoulders, nails scratching erotically across his nipples and the planes of his abs before she grabs his belt buckle.

He chuckles, sliding his hands up to her hair. “So much for ‘I’m never, ever going to have sex with
She pulls her hands back from his belt and shrugs, feigning indifference. “Well, if you’re going to complain . . .” Her jest is ruined by how breathless she is. She grins at him, looking happy and relaxed and full of joy and want; Lucifer simply can not believe that she is his. Their eyes lock and the levity is gone, just leaving the heavy, glorious weight of what is between them.

“Chloe,” he groans, and she’s back to his belt, then in his pants and he is in her hands, at her mercy. When they are both finally naked, they are beyond ready as she rises above him, sinks down on to him. It’s been years in the making and suddenly he understands why humans call to his Father in the throws of passion, because there is nothing in his life that he has ever experienced that is more divine that filling her, feeling her soft wet heat wrap around him like a vice. He nearly comes right there. She groans his name, bracing herself against his chest as she sets a steady rhythm. Lucifer is lost to her—loving her is both so much simpler and so much more than any other act of sex he’s ever experienced. He wants to extend it and draw out every ounce of pleasure for her, but instead, he just lets himself feel her, explore her—know her body as he knows her mind. She rides him as if her life depends on it and he rises to meet her, desperate to get closer. Far too soon, he feels her start to flutter around him, and they crash over the edge together.

As they come down, she finds his mouth and they kiss until they are both breathless again. He flips them and uses his hands and mouth on her neck and breasts to bring her to the edge again. When he starts moving again, he goes slow and deep, spending as much time loving her as they did coming together. It’s never felt like it does with her—by the time they tumble over again, they are both sweating and trembling and they’ve worked themselves so high that his vision whites as she comes around him, as he explodes inside her. He rolls so he doesn’t crush her, hooking her leg as he goes to keep them joined. Her fingers card over his lips as she looks at him through heavy lids, working on catching her breath. “I love you, Lucifer,” she whispers, burying her face in his shoulder. He wraps himself around her.

For eons, he never belonged anywhere. Heaven didn’t want him, Hell could not hold him. Here on Earth, he finally felt he belonged, but duty has bound him to Hell. Now he is like a ship that must travel between worlds, with a job to do in Hell while his heart and soul is here. She is his home port—the place that is emblazoned on him for all eternity, the place he will always return to. The only place he belongs. He kisses her and whispers his love, his devotion. With the afternoon sun sinking closer to the Pacific Ocean through the windows, Lucifer sleeps.
Chloe wakes to a perfect sunset, blazing yellow and orange as it sinks into the Pacific, framed by the floor to ceiling windows of the bedroom. Behind her, she feels the heat of the stars, and banded around her in a cocoon of protection.

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I owe you all a huge apology for taking so long with this update. August means back to school, and it kicked my ass as always. This thing is probably a little rough around the edges, but it made me cry while writing it. I hope you enjoy and I can't thank you enough for taking the time to read. This is BY FAR the longer thing I have ever written, and even when I thought I was almost finished there was more. Be on the lookout for a one-shot post script to this in the future....it's already in the works.

Chloe wakes to a perfect sunset, blazing yellow and orange as it sinks into the Pacific, framed by the floor to ceiling windows of the bedroom. Behind her, she feels the heat of the stars, and banded around her in a cocoon of protection. She knows he's awake because his fingers trail across her skin...first around the swell of one breast, then to her nipple, across to the opposite nipple, the opposite swell, them slowly across her collar bone before repeating their journey. It makes her feel cherished, and she grabs his hand to gently kiss the palm to let him know she's awake before returning it to continue it's ministrations. "What a beautiful sunset," she whispers.

"Beyond compare" he says, and the way he nuzzles into her hair makes her think that maybe he is talking about more than the sunset. "We have a conversation to finish," he says gently, and her heart stops for a second. When last they spoke about his previous trips to Hell, it had hurt him. She isn't sure she's ready to invite that in now, when everything is glowing and beautiful. She isn't ready, and worse, she's afraid he isn't either.

"Lucifer, we don't have to…" she says carefully.

He nuzzles into her hair again. "I actually don't mind. Shocking I know. No one is more surprised than myself, really.". The fingers stay from their path to run up her neck. He slides the back of his fingers along her cheek. "It was a bit of a revelation to me, what I said about not being ready for us before. I hadn't thought of it that way. It… helps"

"Okay," she says, and reaches back to stroke his hip.

"Mum dumped your miracle status on me the evening of Carlisle. Right after I bloody accepted that we were real, she made me see it was a manipulation. I was furious. At the time, I thought you were in on it. When I came to your apartment that night, it was to confront you."

She strokes his hip soothingly, a silent show of support. "And then I saw you, and bloody hell, I knew what had happened, and it terrified me that I could lose you. Manipulation or no, you were important to me. I hoped, briefly, that Amenadiel had played a hand, that he could help you, but that delusion was short lived. When you were in the hospital Detective, I couldn't even go in to see you. We were out of options, and we both know I don't lie to you. So I settled for watching through the window like a creepy fellow."
It was Daniel who made me realize that the only person who could help, I could actually reach. So I positioned myself under you . . ."

It was so inappropriate, but clearly Lucifer had been rubbing off on her, because she snorted.

"Really Detective," he chuckles, sounding scandalized. His arms tighten around her, and she steels herself for what she knows is coming--it's the only logical way he could have obtained the cure. Well, logical if you were talking about the freaking Devil, she amended mentally. "Maze and the Doctor helped, of course. Amenadiel stayed with you to make sure they didn't move you. I had no idea what would happen if you moved away from me while my soul was in Hell. It was really no big thing, though--I had the cure in no time."

She threads her fingers through his. No big thing, indeed. He'd only died for her a second time and returned to a place he loathed. Not to mention things are never that simple, especially not for Lucifer. She holds on and waits while he gathers his thoughts.

"I was leaving Carlisle's loop--you remember those?"

She nods. "And then I heard music playing through another of the doors, a piano of all things. There is no music in Hell, you see, except for what is found in hell loops or used for torture. This felt oddly familiar, and I felt drawn, so I opened the door. Behind it, I found Uriel, sitting in at my piano in my penthouse."

Chloe's breath catches and thinks back to Lucifer's broken expression on the balcony as he told her about Uriel, and she thinks she knows where this is going. She tightens her hold on him and bands her other hand around his, anchoring him to her in what's to come.

He nuzzles into her hair again before he continues. To her surprise, his voice remains level. "Turns out I'd stumbled into my own Hell loop. No surprise, really, I should have expected it. I molded the bloody place, after all. I died a mortal death, and guilt is as much my thing as punishment, it seems, so of course I had a loop. I killed Uriel a hundred times, maybe more, before my mother rescued me. Had she not come, Maze and Dr. Linda would not have been able to revive me."

She turns then in his arms, needing to see his face. She had to have misunderstood, because it sounded like he nearly hadn't made it back. "What?" She demanded.

He raises a shoulder as if it was no big thing. "I got stuck in my own loop," he said, as it was a simple thing. She feels like she may be drowning. "Like I said, I should have known better. Mortal souls can leave their loops any time they wish, but they never do. Their guilt rules them. I allowed mine to rule me, until Mum reminded me of you."

Chloe feels tears pool in her eyes. She slides her hands through his hair, grabs on and pulls him to her, searching his eyes. "What the hell were you thinking Lucifer?" He almost hadn't made it back. "What?" She demanded.

"You were going to die," he says matter-of-factly. "Nothing else mattered."

The tears fall. And he accuses her of being selfless. She drops her forehead against his, sliding her hands along him to pull him closer. "You have to promise me you won't do anything like that again," she demands.

The bastard has the indecency to scoff at her. "I'll do no such thing, Detective. I don't lie to you, remember? And there isn't a chance in Heaven or Hell that I won't do anything in my power to keep you safe."
"Lucifer…” He puts a finger to her lips, then slides it softly along the swell of her bottom lip.

"Partners, Detective, remember?” He says, as if that closes the argument. And maybe it does. Because if Chloe really thinks about it, she would do anything she could to keep him safe, too. The only problem is her damn mortality and lack of powers in a world that is far bigger and more complicated than she had ever dreamed.

And then he's kissing her, and she surrenders to him as he ignites the heat in her. How can she not? The light of day fades to dark, and she's all too aware that the clock is ticking. Sooner or later, Lucifer plans on returning to Hell. Again. Selfless to a nauseating fault.

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Three orgasms and several hours later, she perches on what has apparently become her stool at the island, watching Lucifer cook again. This time, the music is jazz, and the apron covers only his silk boxers. She loves watching the play of his muscles as he works. She's wearing one of his shirts, with only a few buttons secured. He fills her wine glass, humming along to *Blue Skies*. He tells her about how he came to know Candy, and his motivations for marrying her in more detail. "I wanted to peek inside my Mum's brain. But I also wanted to give you an out. After almost losing you, I knew I had to do whatever I could to protect you. That included letting you be, not pursuing you as I wished to. I believed then that you didn't have a choice."

She skates her fingers across his obsidian ring and shrugs. "Maybe I don't. So what?"

He takes a sip of his wine and shrugs. "Dad knows I tried to stay away. I only lasted two weeks. So maybe neither of us do."

"In this case," she says with a smile. "I don't mind in the least.". He chuckles and returns her smile, and Chloe thinks he seems lighter tonight than she's ever seen him.

When dinner is over, he lifts her to the counter and slides between her thighs, bringing her to the precipice over and over again before he finally sends her tumbling over the edge. He cleans the kitchen while she recovers, he then he plays for her. After, he spreads her out across it and makes her feel cherished as he comes with her this time, her name on his lips. The christen the stairs and the dining room table before they head back upstairs, and Chloe thinks Lucifer may have a mental "to-do" list he's trying to complete before Trixie gets home. She doesn't mind in the least, but the thought reminds her of the clock. *Tick tick tick. Demons called, they want their king back.*

He whispers his love to her as they peak again later, together in bed. She stays awake long after his breathing evens out. She holds on to him, hands carding over his back, his shoulders, his neck. This is everything, he is everything, and this is so much more than she hoped for and Chloe can't seem to quell the panic rising in the back of her throat. *It will never be long enough*, he'd said earlier. She's realizing like so many of his worries, it goes both ways. *Tick tick tick*. He'll leave again and she'll have to go on, really knowing what he's going back to, what he's been through, what he's giving up. What she'll have to give up, too. In the end, she takes the advice Lucifer gave Trixie. *Hold on and listen.*

She finally falls asleep to the cadence of Lucifer's breathing, watching his stars twinkling over the ocean.

**

She wakes to him kissing her. They come together again. He makes her breakfast in the soft morning light of the kitchen, with the doors open wide so that they can hear the waves crashing on
the beach. They eat. They make love again. They walk on the beach. Trixie comes home shortly after, and Chloe thinks her heart may explode from the beauty of just being with the two of them together. Dan stays for a while, but she can feel the awkwardness as he looks her up and down, cheeks reddening. She must look as well bedded as she feels. Trixie swims in the pool and demands Lucifer play Monopoly with them, and then Monopoly deal, which is a strange card-based version of the original. Everything is so damn perfect. He plays the piano as she and Trixie cuddle on the couch. They play games and draw and chat when he cooks lunch, and later dinner. They walk on the beach. Trixie plays in the waves and Lucifer just watches, his fingers intertwined with Chloe’s. His lips seem quirked in a perpetual smile and she catches him looking down at her whenever he thinks she’s looking away. It’s so good and it can’t last, and Chloe’s heart is bursting but also suffocating because she wants this forever.

After dinner, Trixie sits between Chloe and Lucifer while they continue Harry Potter. Lucifer runs his fingers through the errant locks of Chloe’s hair as she and Trixie take turns reading. Trixie leans into her mom, but her feet are tucked under Lucifer’s thigh, like she’s worried he might disappear. Based on that dream she’d shared, Chloe figures she probably is worried about just that.

Dan had brought more of Trixie’s things earlier in the day, and now they settle her in her room. She’s beaming through tired eyes as Chloe tucks her in. “It’s so pretty here, Mommy. I love being so close to the beach again.”

Chloe kisses her on the forehead. “I’m so glad, Monkey. Get some rest, okay?”

Lucifer is leaning in the doorway, watching them with something undefinable shining in his eyes. When Chloe leaves the room, he pulls her against him and hugs her fiercely. She doesn’t question him and just holds on. She feels it too, the perfection and the ticking clock. When they go to bed, he kisses her like she holds all the air in the world, but again that’s as far as it goes. They fall asleep tangled together. Tick, tock.

**

Two days later, on Monday, Trixie returns to school. Dan comes right after breakfast to drive her. Chloe has taken an extended leave of absence, unwilling to miss any time with Lucifer. On Wednesday, Lieutenant Ochoa calls and asks that she and Lucifer come in and review the Flores case, which is dead in the water. It’s nice to fall back into their old routine, and they have solved it by Friday. Ochoa shakes his head in disbelief as Chloe hands him the completed paperwork before five.

“Damn, Decker, you two are something else.” She smiles and agrees, but then Ochoa twists the knife. “You sure you can’t get Mr. Morningstar to stick around?”

She swallows back the unexpected panic at his question. The clock, momentarily forgotten, is suddenly loud in her mind. Tick, tock. “Not for lack of trying, sir.”

She tries not to run out of his office. She doesn’t go back to the precinct until much later, when Lucifer’s gone. It hurts too much to be there with him, knowing that too is going to end.

They pick Trixie up from Dan’s in Lucifer’s newly acquired ’67 Mustang, candy apple red and complete with a backseat for Trixie. They invite Dan over to the house for dinner. The entire weekend is perfection, with sunshine and laughter with Trixie by day, and Lucifer wrapped around Chloe and in her and everywhere by night, soft and quiet since Trixie is just down the hall. She tries to forget the clock and just live in the moment. No one brings up his imminent return.

Amenadiel appears in their living room on Tuesday afternoon, just as they are about to leave to pick
Trixie up from school. His face is grave and Lucifer stops in his tracks when he sees his brother. He drops Chloe’s hand, and she feels time stop.

“What’s happened, Brother?” Lucifer says carefully, taking a step forward.

“The demons grow restless,” Amenadiel says, and it takes all her effort not to fall or yell or scream. Of course they do. “They need a king,” Lucifer had said so long ago (and yet not that long ago). “I’ve done what I can,” Amenadiel says now, and the rest hangs in the air, unsaid and deafening at the same time.

Lucifer nods. “Of course, brother. Thank you, for staying for so long.” Not long enough, she thinks. It had been longer in Hell, but less than two weeks here. It wasn’t long enough. She wasn’t ready to let him go. “I need until tonight, though. I know it’s a lot to ask, but I made a promise to Beatrice.”

It’s the soft way she says her daughter’s name that finally breaks her. She feels the tears rush to her eyes. She’s not the only one that loses him, Trixie will too. Trixie loves him almost as much as she does. She blinks back the tears and pushes past both of them to the car. She hears Lucifer calling her title after her. She has herself under control by the time he joins her. They drive in silence, fingers intertwined over the center console. She traces the landscape in her mind as they drive, focusing on the wind in her hair and the warmth of his hand rather than the fact that everything is going to change. *Time’s up.*

Trixie grins when she sees them, running to the car, but her stride falters when she sees her mother’s face. Chloe watches as her daughter’s eyes turn to Lucifer, and she watches her bright smile fade as understanding dawns. She’s far too wise for her twelve years. There are tears in her eyes as she throws herself into her mother’s arms.

“I’m not ready,” she whispers into Chloe’s shoulder. Chloe holds on tight, and thinks that she isn’t either. But she can’t say it. Saying it makes it real, and she gets the oddest sense of déjà vu.

As they drive, Trixie speaks of the elephant in the sleek classic car. “You have to go back.”

Lucifer nods, never taking his eyes off the road.

“When?” She asks.

Chloe watches as his jaw works, his eyes looking watery and full of pain. “Tonight,” he says finally. Chloe hears a pained noise, realizes it is her when Lucifer looks toward her with alarm. He threads the fingers of his right hand through hers and brings the back of her hand over his heart. “I wish there was another way, child, but the demons grow restless. But I gave you my word, I won’t disappear without telling you again. And I won’t stay gone as long this time. You are to pray for me at the end of the school year.” Chloe is crying again. The Devil has considered the fears of her daughter and has a plan to assuage them, to make sure she knows she can bring him back whenever Trixie needs him. “You’re to tell me all about the time between now and then. It’s only a month—not too long even for a mortal, Beatrice. I’ll miss no more birthdays, so long as you remember to let me know.”

He never lies. If he says he’ll be back, Chloe has to believe it will be so. He has no way to measure time there, apparently, so they will simply need to remind him to return. She can hold on to that. It doesn’t have to be like last time. This doesn’t has to be the end.

Lucifer plays games with them until Chloe and Trixie are no longer able to contain their tears. He plays the piano until he can no longer contain his own. He holds them for as long as he can. He cooks them a last meal that they don’t eat, and then he packs it away in the refrigerator so they won’t
go hungry later, admonishing them both to take care of themselves and each other. He leads them out to the pool deck, then, and hugs them both. “I love you, Chloe, Beatrice. You mustn’t let your lives stand still while I am away--I couldn’t bear it. I will return to you, as long as you wish for me to.”

Chloe, who has always prided herself in not being clingy, holds on to him with all her might. “We will always want you, need you with us. I love you.”

Trixie just clings and nods, and it breaks Chloe’s heart all the more.

There isn’t much else to say. “This isn’t goodbye,” he says softly, and it’s so very different from the last time he left her on the penthouse balcony. They have had time to talk and love and just be, and this time he’s leaving her with the promise of returning. But it still hurts, still feels like a huge piece of her heart is leaving. “Until June, then,” he says, as he ruffles Trixie’s hair and palms Chloe’s cheek.

He unfurls his wings then, and Chloe hears Trixie’s gasp of surprise, even through her tears. “Wow,” Trixie whispers. Chloe wraps her arms around her daughter. “I love you,” she tells him. “Here and in Hell and anywhere you are.”

She sees unshed tears in his eyes. “You know how to reach me,” he says. And then his wings flex, and she and Trixie watch as he rises in the sky. He is out of sight in less than a minute, and she and Trixie are left crying alone on the pool deck of the exquisite house that is their home with Lucifer.

**

Lucifer is always a Devil of his word, and he never misses the good stuff. He came at the end of the school year that first year of middle school. He stayed long enough to take Trixie and Chloe on quick two week whirlwind vacation to Baja California. Trixie has thought it was beautiful and that the ocean there was the most fantastic thing. They went whale watching and snorkeling and kayaking with killer whales swimming around them. He never missed a birthday or a holiday, or anything she had at school. There were times when she would call for him, when there was something she couldn’t handle talking about with her mom or dad. Her mom missed him, but she managed to keep going when he wasn’t there. She finally took a new partner at work. She didn’t lose herself like she did the first time Lucifer left. Her Dad was better too, he didn’t have that far off look in his eyes anymore that had become normal after Charlotte had died.

When Lucifer isn’t there, Trixie learns to play the piano and trains with Maze. She throws herself into school and boys, and just being a teenager. She tries not to pay too much attention to the wary look the other kids give her. She wonders if it’s the fact that both of her parents are cops, or the fact that she is frequently picked up from school by Maze that has them acting so odd. There is something about Maze, flawlessly beautiful in her ridiculously scant leather outfits, that initiates fear in most humans. Trixie admits that's probably a good thing, since she is a demon, and every now and then she wonders why that healthy dose of fear is missing in her. She's glad it is though, because Maze really is the best friend a girl could ask for.

The house filled with pictures of Lucifer and Mommy and Trixie, either on the beach or by the pool or in whatever exotic location Lucifer swept them off to during school breaks. Time passed, and while it wasn’t perfect, Mommy was happy enough in the in-between times, and absolutely radiant when Lucifer was there with them.

Everything changed on an otherwise normal Thursday afternoon when Trixie was in 10th grade. She is sitting in her Chemistry class, working on electron configurations and valence shells when she is called to the office. This was nothing outside of the ordinary, and Trixie isn’t worried until she
steps into the office and sees her Dad. One look at the devastation on his face has Trixie closing her eyes and calling for Lucifer. *Lucifer, come quick. Something bad has happened, but I don’t know what.* As soon as that’s done, Trixie walks straight into her dad’s arms, and he says the thing she already knew were coming. “It’s your mom, kiddo. It’s not good.” He signs her out, then grabs her hand and leads her outside to the car.

Outside, an unusual fall rainstorm is in full swing. Her dad doesn’t seem the least bit surprised to see Lucifer standing, soaking wet and in a three-piece suit, next to his car. He looks terrible, his face a mask off stone with eyes that look ancient. Trixie wonders if her dad notices the grey ash pooling in the water that’s collected around Lucifer’s feet. Dad simply opens the car door and motions for Lucifer to get in, pressing Trixie to sit next to him. She’s grateful, because she is trying really hard not to freak out and jump to conclusions, and it helps when she twines her fingers through Lucifer’s. His hands feel like ice—it’s the first time she can ever remember that his hands don’t feel comfortably warm to the touch. She feels the panic ride. Lucifer squeezes her hand, a comfort despite the coolness of his hand.

Her dad pulls out of the lot with his lights on. “She was working a case involving a hit man who likes to use bombs to take out his victims,” her dad explains as they fly toward the hospital. “She and Jenkins found the guy’s residence, went to check it out.” Sally Jenkins had been Mom’s partner for over a year now. Trixie liked her.

“Bloody hell,” Lucifer rasps. Trixie squeezes his hand tighter.

“Yeah,” Dad says. “Place was booby trapped. Jenkins didn’t make it, and Chloe,” her dad breaks off and Lucifer reaches forward, squeezes his shoulder in a silent show of support. “She’s in surgery right now. It doesn’t look good.”

Trixie feels the tears spring unbidden, and hears the involuntary sound Lucifer makes. Her wraps his arms around her. Unlike so many adults, he doesn’t whisper platitudes. He simply holds her as she cries in the back of her dad’s car as they race to the hospital.

**

They wait for five hours for her to come out of surgery. Lucifer paces for most of it. Trixie alternates between walking with him and sitting with her dad. Maze and Linda come too, and it helps a little. Lucifer rants to Trixie, and the other two women, about how if he’d been there, he could have helped her. He could have healed her, he could have *done something*. They pat his shoulder and try to assuage his guilt, but Trixie knows it doesn’t do a damn thing for him. She paces with him and they concoct a plan.

“If it looks like things are going south,” Trixie says carefully, “I’ll distract them and you have to get in to see her, to give her a feather.”

Lucifer pauses his pacing, stuffing his hands into the dry pockets of the suit Maze had brought him. “I don’t know if it will work,” he says softly. “I don’t know that divine healing has ever been used on a mortal so long after their injury.” His brown eyes are heavy with fear. “What if it’s more than I can fix?”

Trixie swallows and shakes her head. “We’re not going to lose her, Lucifer.”

He purses his lips and pulls her into his arms. “You continue to remain a devious little minx, Beatrice. One of my favorite things about you.” He presses a kiss on the crown of her head.

A doctor comes out then, and calls, “Decker?”
Lucifer and Trixie get to go in to see her first. It's supposed to be one at a time, but Lucifer uses his mojo on the doctor. Her mom looks frail in the hospital bed, wrapped in bandages in several locations. The doctor had told them that they had needed to crack her chest open to repair internal damage done by shrapnel from the explosion, but that she was doing as well as could be expected.

Lucifer takes her hand gently, kisses it. He's already apologizing to her for not being there, and Trixie can't help it, she breaks then. She's seen her mom in the hospital before, but never like this. There's a tube in her mouth and the machines keep track of her heart rate. Lucifer grabs Trixie, pushes her into a chair next to her mom and makes soothing circles on her shoulders as she cries. Trixie thinks he cries too. She knows he keeps apologizing, again and again. Trixie finally tells him to stop, that his being there may not have changed anything, that maybe he'd be dead like Jenkins.

They talk again about trying to heal her, and decide it's best to wait and see. Her dad comes in, then Linda and Maze in turn. No one asks Trixie or Lucifer to leave. Trixie wonders if it's because they are family, or because her mom is a cop, or because Lucifer has done something to make sure they can stay with Mom.

They talk to Mom for a long time, and then when they run out of things to tell her, Trixie tells Lucifer about the night her mother came home and told her that she had shot Lucifer. "I teased her that she must like you," she chuckled.

Some of the pain in his eyes lifts as he chuckles. "Bloody well took her long enough to admit it."

Lucifer, in turn, tells her about how determined her mother was when Malcolm took her. "I didn't have that much experience with a mother's love, you see," he says softly. "I'd never seen someone so focused on anything. Getting you back was all that mattered."

Eventually, Trixie sleeps in the uncomfortable chair. When she wakes, Lucifer is staring out the window of the hospital room at the city beyond. Trixie glances at her mom, who looks the same. The monitors blip softly, confirming that her mom is still fighting. "Lucifer?" Trixie says softly, feeling as if something is amiss.

"I did some thinking, Beatrice," he says softly, and she can almost hear every eon in his voice, he sounds so tired and ancient. "I need to go take care of something. Can I leave you to watch over your mom for a few hours? I wouldn't leave her, except this is something I must do."

Trixie nods, confused that Lucifer wants to leave. He turns to her then, and presses a box he was holding onto her hands. "Feathers," he says an explanation. "Just in case something happens while I am gone. I'll return as soon as I can.". Trixie nods, and with a quick kids on her cheek, the Devil is gone.

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When Chloe is finally, finally able to find her way out of the thick fog that has consumed her for what feels like forever, Lucifer is there. He is dressed in a t-shirt and sweats, and she wonders if maybe she's in hell because she can't imagine Lucifer would willingly choose to dress like that. He's slumped in a chair next to her bed, staring out the window across the room. Her throat hurts and everything is fuzzy around the edges. She makes a strangled sound as she tries to clear away the pain in her throat.

"Chloe," Lucifer says, shooting up from his chair and to her side in an instant. "It's about bloody time."
Even as she's pointing to her throat, he is producing a cup of water with a straw. She drinks, the cool fluid easing the ache in her throat. "You were intubated until three days ago," he says softly. "That's why your throat is so sore."

"How long?" She croaks.

His lips purse into a thin line. "Six weeks."

"Haha," she says, remembering his panache for saying it's been longer than it actually has been. "No, really, how long?" Oh. His frown tells her, without words, that he wasn't kidding.

"It was bad, Detective," Lucifer says softly.

She sifts through her memory and can't think of details. "Trixie?" She asks.

Lucifer scoffs. "Back to school, much to her dismay. It didn't make sense for her to keep missing."

Because she's been unconscious for a month and a half.

Suddenly she remembers. She ad Jenkins had entered the house of their suspect. Jenkins had activated a trip wire. "Decker, run!" She'd yelled. And then everything had gone black.

She looks at Lucifer, and he knows her well enough to follow her thought process. "She didn't make it, Detective, I am so sorry."

She cries, and he is there.

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It's three weeks before Lucifer can finally take Chloe home. She's so damn relieved when she finally leaves the hospital. Trixie is waiting for them at home. As he drives her home, Chloe finally asks the question that has been weighing on her for weeks. "How much longer until you have to go back?" She asks, afraid for the answer. He hasn't left her side since she woke up, and she knows Hell must be missing it's king by now.

"I'm not going back," he says softly.

She blinks, then stares at him. "What? How?"

To her surprise, he pulls over. He turns to face her. "If you really want to know," he says softly, "I will tell you. But I don't think you want to know. You won't approve, but you should also know that it doesn't matter because this is the only thing I could live with, Chloe.". His hands come up to frame her face. "I almost lost you again, and I can't keep leaving anymore. My heart can't take it, knowing that I could lose you in a million different ways and not even know it. So I made a deal."

What deal? She wants to ask, because anything he might be able to use to bargain with his father is enough to make her stomach turn. His soul, his fealty, his service all come to mind. She isn't worth it.

He knows her, because he gives her shoulders a shake. "My choice," he says. "And I choose you, every time.". So she doesn't ask. She kisses him, and asks him to take her home.

He does. When she returns to work, he's by her side. It's almost as if he never left, except when she walks by the plaque at the front of the precinct, she has to pause and touch Jenkins name, as well as her dad's. Lucifer is there and finally there is no impending doom or dread over the next separation.
Things are never easy, but life is so much more manageable, so much more right with Lucifer in it. His presence is like the sunset, a brilliant promise of beauty in this moment, a night filled with spectacular stars, and the dawn of a new day. It's more than enough, and more than she ever dared to hope for.

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